

RECENT HISTORY
OF THE
LABOR MOVEMENT
IN THE
UNITED STATES

1939-1965

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Progress Publishers
Moscow

ИСТОРИЯ РАБОЧЕГО ДВИЖЕНИЯ В США
В НОВЕЙШЕЕ ВРЕМЯ

ТОМ ВТОРОЙ

(1939-1965)

На английском языке

This book tells the story of the class struggle in the United States during the second and third stages of the general crisis of capitalism. It examines the impact of World War II on the labor movement, the character and specific features of labor's struggle in the postwar period, the rank-and-file movement for a democratic way of development of the trade unions, and the anti-labor policies of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the government. A separate chapter is devoted to American historiography of the US labor movement.

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First printing 1979

©Издательство «Прогресс», 1978, с изменениями

English translation of the revised Russian text

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Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

И 10303—326
014(01)—79 78—78

0901000000

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PREFACE

The present volume of the *Recent History of the Labor Movement in the United States* is a study of the struggle of American workers for economic and political rights during and after World War II; chronologically, it covers the period from late 1939 to 1965.

The period under consideration was crammed with important historical events. The troubled thirties brought mankind to World War II. Germany, where the Nazis had seized power, allied with fascist Italy and militarist Japan and, supported by reactionary forces from other countries, unleashed a new world war. The United States, Britain and France offered no resistance to fascist aggression. On the contrary, their policy of non-interference only helped fan the flames of world war.

The democratic forces of the world headed by the Soviet Union waged a strenuous struggle against fascism and the threat of war. They proposed and championed the idea of collective security and the formation of a popular anti-fascist front. But the British and French governments rejected collective security, and embarked on a course of abetting the aggressors.

Under these circumstances the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, aimed at mobilizing the people against fascism and the threat of war, were of

historic significance. But at that particular time the popular forces lacked adequate strength and cohesion. The absence of unity in the ranks of the world proletariat on the eve of World War II had an adverse effect on the course of international events. In the fascist states, the labor movement was smashed, and in the bourgeois-democratic countries the working class was split, with an appreciable part of it following the Social-Democrats, who in most countries came out against a policy of a popular front and joint action by working-class forces.

As shown in Volume I of the present work, a similar situation prevailed in the American labor movement. It, too, lacked organizational and ideological unity. Most American workers were under the influence of isolationist ideas, and were politically disoriented by the opportunist leadership of the trade unions. As concerns the Communist Party of the USA, it was small in numbers and subjected to persecution. True, all difficulties notwithstanding, along with other democratic forces it succeeded in doing important work in defense of peace and in support of the anti-fascist movement that began to gain momentum in the United States on the eve of the war. But this movement could not alter the foreign policy of the Roosevelt Administration, which refrained from taking vigorous action against the fascist states.

The American imperialist circles that had helped Hitler Germany in building up its war potential were counting on Germany and Japan being reduced to the status of second-rate powers as a result of World War II, and thereby removed as competitors in the world market. At the same time, they cherished the hope that a war between Germany and the Soviet Union would sap the strength of the latter, and the country of socialism would be destroyed or irreparably weakened.

But these hopes were frustrated: the countries in the fascist camp were defeated. The historic victory over fascism, in which the Soviet Union played the decisive role, altered the correlation of forces in the world in favor of socialism. The capitalist system suffered a tremendous loss when several European and Asian countries in which People's Democracies were established dropped away from it. As a result, the postwar

period saw the emergence of the world socialist system and disintegration of colonialism. Thus, following World War II and a number of socialist revolutions in European and Asian countries, capitalism entered the second stage of its general crisis.

The primary driving force in the struggle against fascism was the international working class which made the greatest contribution both in battle against the fascist armies on the war fronts and in the Resistance movement in the enemy's rear. It was through its efforts that weapons, ammunition, food and equipment were produced. And after the war, it was through its efforts that cities and towns were raised from the ruins and the riches of human society created. The political consciousness and activity of the workers grew; the Communist and Workers' parties steeled themselves ideologically and organizationally, and the trade unions grew in membership and degree of organization. Not only did new national labor centers emerge, but a World Federation of Trade Unions came into being, too.

The American working class played a significant role in this general stream of the international proletarian movement. Its mass organizations did important work in preparing the country for entry into the war against fascism. During the war, the American proletariat's democratic traditions and anti-fascist sentiment manifested themselves. But even during those years, the class struggle within the country did not stop. The workers continued to defend their class interests against encroachments by capital.

After the war, American imperialism altered its foreign policy, switching from alliance with the USSR to cold war. As a consequence, Soviet-American relations deteriorated.

The same trend came to underlie domestic policy, Roosevelt's liberal course was rejected and political reaction intensified. This led to a campaign of persecution against democratic elements that was to reach sweeping dimensions during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations.

The 1950s saw an upsurge of class struggle in the United States. The strike movement mounted. But the labor movement is something more than just the strike struggle. In

the broad sense, it embraces a number of other general and particular problems which will be examined in this book.

The 1960s were marked by a further exacerbation of the domestic political situation, manifesting itself particularly in the actions of the working class, Negro riots, student unrest and political assassinations. During these years, the role and influence of the working class in the internal life of the country grew. Its political activity increased. At the upper levels of the trade union movement the struggle around the burning problems of the times became sharper. At the same time, the rank-and-file union membership and many union officials more and more openly displayed their dissatisfaction with the reactionary policies of the right-wing labor leaders headed by George Meany, further aggravating the conflicts within the labor movement.

The struggle between two tendencies in the trade union movement—the democratic and the opportunist—still remains a factor influencing the American labor unions and the labor movement in general. Today, as in the past, the struggle between these tendencies is a characteristic feature of American history.

The labor question in the United States increasingly attracts the attention of each successive administration, Congress and the American political parties. It draws the attention of public opinion in other countries as well. In the Soviet Union, there is wide interest in the problems of the US labor movement.

Fundamental ideas and propositions from the teaching of Marx, Engels and Lenin formed the methodological basis of the present work. The authors gathered and studied a large body of documentary and statistical material and made use of publications put out by labor unions, the government and political parties, Congressional Records and proceedings of conventions of AFL and CIO unions and the Communist Party. They drew on materials found in the National Archives of the USA and the archives and libraries of the major labor unions, the Catholic University in Washington, Cornell University, and the universities of Wisconsin and California, as well as some materials in the archives of the USSR Council of Trade Unions and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, CC

CPSU. The authors also drew on works by American and Soviet historians, economists and sociologists dealing with the class struggle in the USA.

In the Preface to Volume I of the present work the chapters and authors were identified according to the Russian edition. Since in the English edition the structure was somewhat altered the authorship of Volume I goes as follows: G. N. Sevostyanov (Preface), I. M. Krasnov (Chapters I, II and III), Y. F. Yazkov (Chapters IV, V and XI), I. I. Cherkasov (part of Chapter VI), N. V. Kurkov (part of Chapter VI and Chapter XIII), N. V. Sivachyov (Chapters VII, XIV and part of Chapter XVII), V. L. Malkov (Chapters VIII, IX, X, XII, XX and part of Chapters XVII and XXI), B. Y. Mikhailov (Chapters XVI, XVIII, XIX and part of Chapters XV and XVII), A. N. Shlepakov (part of Chapter XV) and S. M. Askoldova (part of Chapter XXI).

The authors of Volume II are B. Y. Mikhailov (Preface, Chapters I, II, III, IV, VI, XVI and Conclusion), I. I. Zhmykhova (Chapters V, IX, XIV and part of Chapter VI), V. A. Korolkov (Chapters VII and VIII), A. P. Medvedev (Chapters X and XI), P. A. Shishkin (Chapters XII, XIII, XV and part of Chapter XVI) and A. N. Shlepakov (part of Chapter XIII).

The next volume of the work, covering problems of the postwar period, is presently in preparation.

CHAPTER I

LABOR AND THE WAR IN EUROPE. "KEEP AMERICA OUT!"

Early in the morning of September 1, 1939, the American people learned that war had broken out in Europe. Newspaper headlines blared: "Hostilities Begun!", "Hitler Acts Against Poland", "Envoys Tell of Bombing of 4 Cities", "Britain Evacuates 3,000,000 in Cities", "Roosevelt Warns Navy". The radio reported rapid movement of Hitler's troops in Poland, the capture of Danzig, and the demarches by the British and French governments.

Crowds of people gathered in the streets and squares of American cities and towns, anxiously discussing the possible consequences of the war for America. The question of greatest concern to Americans was whether the United States could avoid taking part in it.

On September 3, when Britain and France declared war on Germany, President Roosevelt delivered a major address over the radio, in which he promised to pursue a policy of non-intervention. He said: "I trust that in the days to come our neutrality can be made a true neutrality."¹ However, the President's speech was full of reservations. Despite assurances that the United States would not enter the conflict as long as it remained within his power to prevent it, his address evoked serious doubts in the practicability of a policy of non-intervention.

On September 5, the government issued a neutrality proclamation, stating that the United States would not

¹ *The New York Times*, September 4, 1939.

participate in the war or help either of the belligerent sides. The proclamation prohibited the recruitment on United States territory of volunteers into the armies of the belligerent nations, the arming or equipping of their ships and their use of American territorial waters for military purposes. It also provided for a number of other restrictions and rules of conduct for the crews of their ships in American ports. At the same time, in accordance with the Neutrality Act, a proclamation embargoing arms shipping to the belligerents was issued.

The nation's political and military leaders, headed by the President, adopted a waiting tactic. They felt that a policy of non-intervention best met the goals and interests of the United States, which sought to derive the greatest possible benefit from the war in Europe.

At its initial stage, the war in Europe was an imperialist war. It arose within the capitalist system and was the logical consequence of its profound contradictions. The chief instigator of the war was German fascism, the striking force of international reaction. In contrast to imperialist World War I, World War II took place in socio-political conditions that had changed due to the existence of the Soviet Union, whose peaceful foreign policy was a potent factor for counteracting the aggressive plans of Hitler Germany.

But the Soviet Union could not single-handedly avert the war danger. This was something that required the joint efforts of the USSR, the USA, Britain and France. The Soviet Union had proposed just such a policy of collective security in Europe long before the onset of the war. But the ruling circles of the bourgeois-democratic states turned thumbs down on any effective program of struggle for preserving peace, and embarked instead on a course of appeasing Hitler.

Like Great Britain and France, the United States, pursuing its policy of temporizing, rejected cooperation with the Soviet Union, thus killing the chances of a collective rebuff to fascist aggression.

The Munichite politicians (who tried to appease Hitler with the Munich agreement of 1938 that predetermined the partition and subsequent occupation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany) sought to avoid war within the capitalist system. They hoped to channel German aggression in an easterly

direction, against the Soviet Union. To this end, they were prepared to sacrifice the freedom and independence of East European countries. At the crucial moment they did just that.

The Soviet Union, for its part, proceeded from the fact that German imperialist aggression threatened not only itself but the Western powers as well. Consequently, it proposed concluding a mutual assistance treaty, a so-called Eastern Pact, with the Western powers. But such a move did not figure in the plans of the Anglo-French imperialists, who in Munich in September 1938 signed an ignominious agreement with Hitler. Thus, the actions of the governments of the countries of Western democracy quashed any chance of preserving peace through collective security. Under these circumstances, the Soviet Union was left with no other alternative than to delay a confrontation with fascist Germany by concluding a non-aggression treaty with it. This it did in August 1939, thereby winning a certain amount of time for defense preparations and averting the danger of being drawn into war under extremely unfavorable conditions.

The enemies of the Soviet Union in the capitalist world raised a great hue and cry, distorting the Soviet foreign policy and the real aims of the treaty. As historian Thomas Bailey of Stanford University noted, upon the conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact consternation struck those in the West who had fondly hoped that Germany "might be egged upon" the USSR so that the two countries "would bleed each other to death".¹

Thus, contradictions of a dual nature were operating in the initial period of the war. On the one hand, there were the contradictions between the two capitalist groupings, and on the other, there was the imperialist circles' class hatred of the Soviet Union. The desire of both groups of imperialists to provoke hostilities against the USSR also explains what came to be called the "phony war" which began after the defeat of Poland.

German fascism was not only pursuing the aim of gaining world dominance; it was also driven by ideological, class motives as it sought the destruction of the USSR and suppression of the democratic movement throughout the world.

¹ Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant. A History of the Republic*, Boston, 1956, p. 867.

However, it encountered growing resistance on the part of the peoples of Europe. The Resistance movement, which had already let itself be felt during the short German-Polish war, kept growing and increasingly influenced the character of World War II.

Did this factor have any impact on the political situation in the United States? It did not at first, since bourgeois propaganda gave a biased account of the military operations and ignored such things as the growing guerrilla war in a number of European countries. Later, however, as more countries fell victim to aggression and their progressive forces reinforced the Resistance, this factor increasingly contributed to an intensification of anti-fascist sentiments in America. Sooner or later the attitude in trade union circles was bound to undergo serious evolution from neutrality to an awareness of the necessity of US participation in the war.

It is quite apparent that the character and specific features of the American labor movement at that time were determined by the goals and tasks of the progressive forces in the struggle against fascism, and this requires that in studying the problems of the class struggle in the United States the basic factors in the development of World War II and of US domestic and foreign policy should be taken into account.

When the war broke out in Europe, the American working people were strongly under the influence of isolationist and neutralist propaganda, and for this reason the policy of neutrality proclaimed by the government enjoyed the support of the broad masses, including, above all, the working class. In the initial period of the war, only a few progressive Americans realized how damaging these sentiments were to the cause of peace.

Among those who understood this full well was the US Communist Party. From the very first days of the war it condemned isolationism and passiveness and demanded vigorous US action to restore peace. The Communist Party called for aid to Poland, an embargo against Japan and Germany, credits and material aid to China; and the re-establishment of the national independence of Czechoslovakia and Austria. Time and again it declared that the war in Europe was the second imperialist war.

Only a minority in the United States shared this view of the events in Europe. The Communist Party had extremely limited possibilities to reach the public with its message, and the broad masses of workers, who were under the influence of bourgeois propaganda, had a very hazy idea of the real nature of the events taking place. Attitudes in the labor unions were shaped under the influence of the general conditions in which the people found themselves. The workers and the democratic strata were, in Foster's words, "largely isolationist".¹

The most popular slogan characterizing the anti-war sentiment was "Keep America Out of War". Organized workers, concerned over the sudden outbreak of war psychosis in the country, came out with demands for US neutrality. The belief prevailing among unionists was that lifting the arms embargo would lead to war. The labor movement as a whole agreed that America should not let itself be drawn into the maelstrom of the European war. On September 22, 1939, the *Michigan Labor Leader* quoted a passage from a resolution made by Local 7 of the United Auto Workers at the Chrysler plants, which demanded no war except in defense of American soil, nationalization of munitions industries, defeat of mobilization bills that destroyed civil liberties, no war expenditures except for strict defense, and retention of the arms embargo.² At numerous meetings, workers voiced the overriding desire to keep out of the conflicts in Europe and Asia and not let America be drawn into the war. Similar sentiments were expressed at various labor union conventions. Moreover, many union leaders not infrequently used the "Keep America Out of War" slogan in an anti-Soviet spirit.

Characteristic in this respect was the convention of the United Cement, Lime and Gypsum Workers International Union held in September 1939 in St. Louis, Missouri. Noting that the convention was meeting at a particularly important time, the union's president said: "I say to you that we want America to keep out of this war. Ninety per cent of us are hoping and praying that the system of Nazism will be

¹ William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, New York, 1952, p. 387.

² See *Michigan Labor Leader*, September 22, 1939.

overthrown and German workers liberated, and we are hoping that this will be brought about by the Democracies engaged in this affair."¹ AFL president William Green spoke at that convention from the same neutralist positions. He said: "We are going to live in peace, maintain a neutral attitude and refuse to become involved in European conflict. May I urge you again to maintain a neutral attitude both in thought and action."² Shortly afterwards he wrote: "Labor firmly believes that we should have no part in this European War."³

Although in its neutrality proclamation of September 5 the government declared that the official US policy was one of non-intervention, the Neutrality Act passed in 1935 and later amended was subjected to criticism. In view of the economic upswing that had begun, this law, which banned munitions exports, became more and more of a hindrance to the interests of the nation's industrial and financial community, which was now demanding that it be revised. Britain and France, who were pinning great hopes on US assistance, were also interested in this.

There were other reasons, too, for business and political leaders to consider it necessary to adapt the Neutrality Act to the new conditions. Regarding the bloc of fascist countries as their chief rival, they were interested in its defeat, for a victory of Hitler Germany and militarist Japan over Britain, France and China would pose a serious threat to the security of the United States.

At the same time, some Washington politicians were hoping to direct German aggression eastward, and Japanese aggression northward. In either case, the aim was to turn World War II into an anti-Soviet crusade by international reaction. However, Roosevelt and many other farsighted political figures in the United States realized that a fascist victory in Europe and Asia would seriously undermine the positions of the United States. Considering the situation in Europe,

¹ *Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of the United Cement, Lime and Gypsum Workers International Union. Affiliated with the A.F. of L., St. Louis, Missouri*, September 11-16, 1939, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³ *The American Federationist*, October 1939, p. 1051.

Roosevelt decided to call a special session of Congress on September 21, 1939 to review the Neutrality Act. It was not only a question of amending the old law or passing a new one. What had to be decided was the question of the US position as a whole, the direction that the entire domestic and foreign policy of the country would take in the new circumstances.

Addressing a joint session of Congress, Roosevelt urged the repeal of the arms embargo. "These embargo provisions, as they exist today," he said, "prevent the sale to a belligerent by an American factory of any completed implements of war, but they allow the sale of many types of uncompleted implements of war, as well as all kinds of general material and supplies. They, furthermore, allow such products of industry and agriculture to be taken in American-flag ships to belligerent nations."¹

A bill, proposed by the President, providing for cancellation of the embargo, was introduced in Congress. The ensuing debate in both houses was extremely fierce. The advocates of lifting the embargo had only a marginal numerical advantage, but the group of congressmen working to defeat the bill acted very energetically. Republican Senator William E. Borah, justifying the position taken by the opponents of the President's proposal, declared that repeal of the embargo would inevitably draw the United States into the conflict and, moreover, would be a violation of international law.

Republican representative William Blackney sought to rely on the authority of the famous American historian, Charles A. Beard, who had come out at the time with a sharp condemnation of the President's position. Beard had written: "President Roosevelt's foreign policy is as clear as daylight. He proposes to collaborate actively with Great Britain and France in their everlasting wrangle with Germany, Italy and Japan. He wants to wring from Congress the power to throw the whole weight of the United States on the side of Great Britain and France in negotiations, and in war if they manage to bungle the game.... From the point of view of the interests of the United States as a continental nation in this hemisphere, the Roosevelt policy, in my opinion, is quixotic and dangerous. It is quixotic

¹ *Congressional Record* (later referred to here as *CR*), September 21, 1939, p. 11.

for the reason that it is not based upon a realistic comprehension of the long-time history of Europe and Asia."¹

Back in the spring of 1938, the progressive press had attacked Beard's isolationism, pointing out that he made no distinction between the bourgeois-democratic and the fascist countries and ignored the role the working class of Britain, France and the USA were playing in the struggle for peace and democracy. Moreover, Beard, Harry E. Barnes and others of the "neorevisionist" school of historians later declared that the United States had committed a blunder in foreign policy by not seeking to form an anti-Soviet bloc with the fascist powers.

The congressional debate was a reflection of the political struggle in the country around the question of war and peace, and testified to deepening differences within the bourgeoisie between those who sympathized with Hitler Germany and those who supported France and Great Britain. At the same time, the desire of Roosevelt and his supporters to get the arms embargo lifted by no means signified that they intended immediately to alter the US position by making the country an active participant in the war. Foreseeing the inevitability of US entry into the war, they felt it necessary to step up preparations for it and give Britain and France the chance to buy munitions. However, for one reason or another, the majority in Congress continued to favor America's neutrality. This was the wish of the general public as well. Congressmen received tens of thousands of letters and telegrams from their constituents demanding that peace be preserved for America.

But while against US involvement in the war, people had no clear idea of how this end could be achieved. Some felt that the arms embargo should continue, others came out for its repeal. Varying views on Roosevelt's foreign policy were revealed in particular in resolutions of various labor union conventions held in late 1939. But as far as the question of whether or not the United States should enter the war was concerned, there were no differences of opinion. Both the AFL and CIO held to the same position—the country should not participate in the war. In October 1939, the AFL held its 59th convention, and the CIO, its second. The AFL convention confirmed the

¹ CR, October 31, 1939, p. 1140.

federation's opposition to the very idea of US involvement. *The American Federationist* magazine, the AFL organ, wrote, "The American Federation of Labor is opposed to any entanglement in European disputes or wars.... The Federation will do everything in its power to have our Government maintain neutrality in spirit and in act."¹

The CIO convention was just as explicit in a resolution saying that the workers did not want war and were against participation in it. The CIO, it said, supported a policy of neutrality based on the demand to keep America out of war, and urged stronger legislation to limit war profits by imposing taxes on excess profits and high incomes.² The CIO leaders called upon all union members to place their full confidence in Roosevelt.

Despite the fact that, by and large, the views of the AFL and CIO leaders with respect to war coincided, the labor unions were not in full agreement concerning the bill to amend the Neutrality Act by lifting the arms embargo.

In late September 1939, the California State Federation of Labor held its 40th convention in Oakland, representing 267,000 rank-and-file AFL members. The convention was unanimous in its opposition to a lifting of the arms embargo. This was the position taken by most AFL unions. But there were also other views on the matter. At their conventions in 1939 and early 1940 a number of CIO unions passed resolutions supporting a new neutrality bill on the condition that peace for America be maintained. Such resolutions were passed, for instance, by the second annual convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (CIO) in San Francisco, the 13th national convention of the Oil Workers' International Union (CIO) in Fort Worth, Texas, the first annual convention of the International Fishermen and Allied Workers of America (CIO) in Bellingham, Washington, and the third annual convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union in North Bend, Oregon. Unlike the AFL unions, the CIO unions were generally inclined to favor revision of the Neutrality Act.

¹ *The American Federationist*, November 1939, p. 1178.

² See *The CIO News*, October 16, 1939.

Some labor leaders not only failed to raise or discuss questions concerning labor's attitude to the war in Europe in their executive committees and locals, but refrained from bringing up such questions at their unions' conventions. For example, in his report to the 24th annual convention of his union held in December 1940 at Lakeland, Florida, William Hutcheson, president of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, said nothing about the war in Europe and the tasks it entailed for the union's membership and leadership. On the whole, public opinion gradually tended to favor the administration's proposal, and this was bound to influence the final decision of Congress. Despite stiff resistance, the advocates of amending the Neutrality Act won out. On November 3, 1939, Congress approved the final version of the new law, the Senate passing it by a vote of 55 to 24, and the House of Representatives, 243 to 172.¹ The President signed the new Neutrality Act on November 4, whereupon he issued a statement indicating the zones from which American ships were thenceforth banned. The new law cancelled the embargo on the export of munitions; belligerents were permitted to buy any goods from the United States on a cash-and-carry basis, that is, if they paid for the goods and shipped them out on non-American ships. US merchant and passenger ships were forbidden to transport goods or passengers of belligerents, or to be armed themselves. Certain restrictions were imposed on ships and submarines belonging to belligerent nations upon their entry into the territorial waters and ports of the United States.

The new neutrality law could in fact be used to advantage by Britain and France because both possessed more powerful naval and merchant fleets in the Atlantic than Germany. Munitions manufacturers were given the opportunity to export arms to Western Europe and to produce them on an ever increasing scale, deriving huge profits therefrom. Objectively, considering the subsequent events, the lifting of the arms embargo also worked in the interests of the nations fighting fascism.

Thus, the course of events compelled the United States to

¹ CR, November 3, 1939, p. 1389.

take the first step toward cooperation with the countries fighting Nazi Germany. In the meantime, the great mass of organized workers continued to oppose US involvement in the war. Americans were most apprehensive of all about sending their soldiers to Europe. Many congressmen and prominent trade union officials underscored this point. Congressman Izak of California, for example, said in this connection: "Our boys must never again be sent across the seas."¹ Robert J. Thomas, president of the United Automobile Workers of America, said at a convention of his union in St. Louis in July 1940: "We do not want to see our boys sent over there for useless butchering, as they were sent over in the previous world war."²

Many labor leaders expounded the idea that while keeping out of the war, the United States would at the same time play a big role in the victory of the democratic forces. The *United Mine Workers Journal*, which was under the influence and supervision of John L. Lewis, spread neutralist and isolationist ideas. So-called "geographic factors" were invoked to support the idea that it was impossible for the war to reach the American continent. The basic argument for denying that there was a war danger for the United States was that America was protected by two vast oceans. One could frequently find statements such as the following in the magazine: "With war raging all over Europe, three thousand miles away, the American people may very well thank God for the Atlantic Ocean."³

In fact, however, the situation was much more complicated than many workers and their leaders imagined. In a message to Congress on January 3, 1940, Roosevelt underlined the fact that the overwhelming majority of American citizens had not abandoned their hope and expectation that the United States would not become involved in the war.⁴ However, he said that those who maintained that all that Americans had to do was to

¹ *Ibid.*, November 1, 1939, p. 1161.

² *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Convention of the International Union—United Automobile Workers of America (CIO)*, St. Louis, July 29 to August 6, 1940, p. 12.

³ *United Mine Workers Journal*, January 1940, p. 9.

⁴ CR, January 3, 1940, p. 8.

mind their own business and keep the nation out of war, were oversimplifying the whole situation.¹

The situation imperatively demanded that the United States re-examine foreign policy and military questions. Nonetheless, the US continued to temporize so as to join in partnership with Britain and France at a time when it could achieve victory with the least losses which meant increased losses to its future allies. For this reason, the government undertook new steps to build up the armed forces, made bigger and bigger appropriations for military purposes, and let out contracts to the monopolies. The production of airplanes, tanks, artillery, ships and ammunition increased.

The war in Europe imparted special importance to the elections coming up in the autumn of 1940. Which of the two dominant bourgeois parties would come to power? Which would gain a majority in Congress? Who would become the new president? What line would Congress and the administration follow in the future? All these questions were of concern not only to America but also to many other countries.

It was quite natural that at a time like this the progressive and left elements in the labor movement felt it imperative to intensify the struggle for working-class unity. Liberal circles in the government, and especially President Roosevelt, resumed efforts to unite the AFL and CIO. This unity was important to Roosevelt in connection with the forthcoming elections, for he was counting on the support of organized labor. During the AFL and CIO conventions, the President sent messages to them urging them to renew negotiations on unifying the two labor union centers. On November 9, 1939, he met with Green in the White House, and again pressed for a resumption of negotiations between the AFL and CIO. However, both sides were far from any thought of reconciliation.

Although the efforts to merge the labor centers failed, their organizations were, in practical terms, faced with the problem of coordinating their actions under the new conditions. Roosevelt, in particular, was interested in winning labor support for the steps he had decided to take to prepare the country for possible entry into the war.

¹ See *The New York Times*, January 4, 1940.

On November 5, 1940, the American people were to go to the polls to elect a president, the entire House of Representatives, one-third of the Senate, and a number of state governors. As always, the bourgeois political parties launched an intensive election struggle.

The Republican national convention opened in Philadelphia on June 24, 1940. There, the party platform, drawn up in the traditional spirit, was adopted. One of its drafters, Senator Lodge of Massachusetts, summed up the substance of the platform in a brief speech. He said, in part: "The Republican Party stands for Americanism, preparedness and peace; no foreign war; an Army and Navy so strong that no unfriendly power can successfully attack America.... National defense is vital to our existence as a nation of free people. A free economy is necessary in war as in peace."¹

The Republicans promised to promote the use of capital, human and agricultural resources in the interest of creating new wealth and profits and raising purchasing power. They promised to extend social insurance to a wider range of Americans, provide for full employment, and guarantee collective bargaining for the workers and credits for the farmers. In a word, as Lodge pointed out in his summary of the points in the platform, no one was to go cold and hungry in America, and there would be equality of opportunity in the industrial and political life of the nation regardless of race, color or creed.

The Republicans fiercely attacked Roosevelt's New Deal. They said, for example, that it had failed to solve the problem of unemployment and revive opportunity for the nation's youth. Moreover, they fastened upon the New Deal full responsibility for the danger of involvement in war.²

Having adopted such a promising platform on literally all the problems facing the nation, the convention delegates nominated Wendell L. Willkie, a well-known attorney for the banking house of Morgan, for president and Senator Charles L. McNary for vice-president.

The Democratic convention opened on July 15, 1940 in

¹ *Ibid.*, June 27, 1940.
² *Ibid.*

Chicago. The election platform adopted there promulgated the idea that the Democratic Party was a peace party pledged to keep the United States out of war. The Republican Party was called the crisis party, unable to raise the living standard of the people or defend the rights of labor and the civil liberties of Americans.

The platform contained many points relating to the status of labor and the rights of Negroes. In particular, it said that the Democrats would continue to develop the New Deal policy and vigorously defend the Wagner Act and the rights of the Negro people. The convention declared that the main task was to achieve national unity and build up the nation's defenses.

Defying the Republicans, who in their platform called for a ban on nominating any President for re-election to a third term, the Democratic convention nominated Roosevelt as its presidential candidate, the first time in the history of the United States that a President was nominated to run for a third term. The Senate passed a resolution introduced by majority leader Alben W. Barkley (Dem., Kentucky), permitting this. The Democratic vice-presidential candidate was Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace.

Once the two parties had adopted their platforms, the election struggle began. Presidential candidates Roosevelt and Willkie set out on campaigning trips around the country.

The Communist Party also entered the election race. It held its national convention May 30 to June 2, 1940, in New York, and adopted a party platform. The convention declared: "Not a cent, not a gun, not a man for war preparations and the imperialist war. Resist the militarization and armaments program.... Fight against war profiteering."¹

Communists were urged to take an active part in the election campaign and to nominate worker candidates on the Party ticket. A special place in the platform was devoted to domestic policies, formulating the tasks of the Party in the fight to satisfy the urgent needs of the people, curb inflation and bring down the cost of living.

The Party convention nominated Earl Browder for president and James Ford for vice-president.

¹ *The New York Times*, June 2, 1940.

In the course of the election campaign, the Communist Party was forced into a position that made it difficult to publicize its platform and its candidates. The Party was subjected to persecution; Communists were fired from their jobs, thrown into jail on charges of conspiracy and attempts to overthrow the existing system, etc.

On the eve of the 1940 election campaign, the Dies Committee charged 50 leading Party workers headed by Foster with un-American activities and demanded that they submit the lists of Party members and an account of the Party's finances. While the Committee was questioning the Party leaders, FBI agents and police raided the Party's offices in Philadelphia, Boston, Los Angeles and other cities.

There were many instances where legal action was brought against union leaders who were active in the left wing of the labor movement. Some of the trials were anti-Communist in character. Much publicity was given, for example, to the trial of 25 leaders of the progressive Fur and Leather Workers Union, which began on February 20, 1940, in a New York federal court. The men were charged with violating the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust law. The union was thereby threatened with the loss of its right to exist and use the strike as a means of protecting the interests of workers.

Despite the lack of proof of the defendants' guilt, the jury found eleven leaders of the union guilty, and the judge sentenced them to various terms in jail. Labor unions launched a campaign of protest against the sentence and demanded the release of the convicted men. One hundred and fourteen leaders of the AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods joined the campaign. They sent Roosevelt a telegram demanding release of the prisoners.

Together with the government and the courts, rightist trade union leaders and the reactionary press also came out against the Communist Party. Reactionary papers called on the FBI and the Department of Justice to suppress the Communist Party. Frequent demands were made in Congress to ban the Party or place it under government control.

In the summer of 1940, as a result of the anti-Communist hysteria, Congress began debate on a bill drafted by Representative Jerry Voorhis of California. Congress passed the bill in

October, at the very height of the election campaigns. Under pretext of struggle against organizations of a "criminal" nature or having a "criminal" tendency, the Voorhis Act made it incumbent upon the government to register all organizations "under foreign control", and prohibit them from having any international ties.

The black list law, as the Communists called it, was spearheaded against the US Communist Party. The legislators in Congress worked out measures to isolate the Communist Party from the international labor and communist movement, and to force it to sever relations with the Comintern. They pictured it as a "foreign agent" and sought to discredit the Party by identifying it with allegedly conspiratorial organizations.

An extraordinary convention of the Communist Party was held November 16 and 17, 1940, in New York to discuss the situation. A report to the convention said that in view of the fact that the Voorhis Act would go into effect on January 1, 1941, the Party had to discuss the measures it must take. The convention reaffirmed the Party's adherence to the principles of proletarian internationalism and its determination to fight for the repeal of the Voorhis Act. The convention also announced that in order to protect the Party from persecution under the Voorhis Act, all organizational ties with the Comintern and all other organizations abroad would be severed.

Thus, as much as two-and-a-half years prior to the dissolution of the Communist International, the US Communist Party left its ranks, forced to take this step to avoid new persecution under the Voorhis Act. Although the Party was still legal, repressive actions against it continued. It was in these difficult conditions that the Party had to wage the struggle in the 1940 elections.

Political struggle centered on the question of attitude to fascism and war. In the second half of 1940, transformation of the imperialist war into an anti-fascist, people's war became increasingly apparent. The suppression of the freedom and independence of entire nations provoked reactions on the part of patriots who had joined the ranks of the partisans and francs-tireurs. The Resistance movement came into being in

Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Italy, France and other European countries.

Liberation tendencies intensified and the idea of a collective rebuff to the enemy matured. The prerequisites for uniting all anti-fascist forces were being created in the course of the war.

Americans watched the events unfolding in Europe in 1940 with a sense of growing alarm. The situation was indeed critical. It showed that the "phony war" had come to an end. On April 9, German troops invaded Denmark, and on April 10, they were already in control of the major ports of Norway. On May 10, Hitler's armies invaded Belgium and Holland, after which the battle for France broke out. The British forces suffered defeat at Dunkirk, and the French army was retreating toward Paris. Under these conditions, Chamberlain's Munichite government in London fell on May 7 and 8, 1940, and two days later Winston Churchill's new war cabinet was formed.

In Washington, in the meantime, Roosevelt was conferring with the military command and members of his cabinet. In connection with the German offensive on the Western Front, Roosevelt told the Pan-American Scientific Congress on May 10, 1940, "I am a pacifist. But I believe that ... you and I, in the long run and if it be necessary, will act together to protect, to defend by every means our science, our culture, our American freedom and our civilization."¹ On May 17, in a message to Congress in which he sought to substantiate the need for a sharp increase in defense spending, he pointed out, quite directly now, that "the American people must recast their thinking about national protection".² The President asked Congress to appropriate at once an additional one billion dollars for the needs of the Army and Navy, which was necessary, in his words, to speed up the production of armaments and military supplies, and increase the output of combat aircraft to 50,000 a year.³

Assessing the President's activity at the beginning of the war, William Z. Foster later wrote that, realizing that the United

¹ *The New York Times*, May 11, 1940.

² *Ibid.*, May 17, 1940.

³ *Ibid.*

States would inevitably enter the struggle against Nazi Germany and militarist Japan, Roosevelt pursued a general course toward war against fascism. Toward this end, Roosevelt's policy initially was one of making the United States "the great arsenal of democracy".

Where did the labor unions stand during the 1940 election campaigns? The leaders of the Communist Party realized that the Communists had no possibility to lead the broad masses of organized and unorganized workers. This circumstance immeasurably raised the responsibility and role of the unions.

Most labor organizations came out in support of Democratic congressional candidates. Union conventions and meetings passed resolutions favoring the re-election of Roosevelt for a third term as a guarantee that the New Deal policies would be continued.

Neutralist sentiments still prevailed in labor union circles, but some supporters of neutrality condemned war preparedness measures while others acknowledged the need for them. On this issue, most of the leaders of the AFL and the Railroad Brotherhoods, as well as those of the miners' union, belonged to the first group, while a considerable part of the CIO leaders and unions were in the second.

Republican backers in the labor unions used the defense measures which the government had decided to undertake as propaganda against the Democrats. They tried, for example, to represent the Burke-Wadsworth Military Service Bill as a betrayal of the national interest. The bill provided for universal military conscription for male citizens from 18 to 65, and compulsory military training. This bill was the first attempt to provide for a regular army based on peacetime conscription. Britain and the United States at the time had small land forces and no compulsory military service. In the past, they had reinforced their armed forces with volunteers. On the eve of World War II, the United States still had no universal military conscription law.

The appearance of such a bill emphasized the vulnerability of peace for America. Matters were moving toward US participation in a big war, and in such a war it would be impossible to operate with volunteers only. But even so, the labor unions came out from pacifist positions and opposed the

bill. They were supported in this by the mass of rank-and-file workers. Time was needed to overcome the obstruction this bill encountered during the lengthy debates. Philip Murray, vice-president of the CIO and United Mine Workers, told the international convention of the United Automobile Workers at St. Louis on August 1 that there was no need of a conscription law in peacetime. He believed that the young men of America should be given an opportunity to enlist in the armed services voluntarily.¹

Congress passed the bill on September 14, 1940, and the President signed it on September 16. It went into effect as the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.² This was a new step by the administration and Congress in preparing the United States for war. Soon, the labor unions also abandoned their opposition to the new law and began to support it. Shortly after the bill was passed, *The American Federationist* wrote: "The American Federation of Labor opposed this bill while it was under consideration because it felt that the traditional American system of voluntary enlistment should be given a full trial first. But now that peacetime conscription has become the law of the land, the American Federation of Labor has pledged every effort to make it supremely successful."³

While supporting the conscription law, the labor unions continued to favor US neutrality. However, this common platform did not rule out differences concerning the rate and scope of preparations for possible involvement in the war. The tenacity and influence of isolationist sentiments among workers evoked varying attitudes among the unions to the government's defense measures. Still, the objective course of World War II, the growing threat of its drawing closer to American shores, and the country's increased preparations for entry into the war, all tended to weaken isolationist sentiments.

The Republicans, however, succeeded in creating opposition to President Roosevelt in the United Mine Workers union, headed by John L. Lewis. Lewis supported Roosevelt in 1936,

¹ See *United Mine Workers Journal*, August 15, 1940.

² *The American Federationist*, October 1940, p. 3; *CR*, September 19, 1940, pp. 12231, 12290.

³ *The American Federationist*, October 1940, p. 3.

but in 1937, relations between them worsened. In 1940, Lewis no longer concealed his pro-Republican orientation and embarked on a course supporting Willkie and McNary. In effect, this decision placed him among the political enemies of Roosevelt. Lewis' position was complicated by the fact that he was president of the CIO, which united almost five million workers, most of whom intended to vote for Roosevelt. Lewis realized that it would be hard for him to continue heading an organization that was oriented toward the Democratic Party. The question facing him was: how to induce the masses to follow him?

He used a variety of maneuvers. At first he tried to convince the workers that Roosevelt would not be nominated for re-election, and that the states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York were trending toward the Republican column.¹ In a major speech at the 36th convention of the UMWU in Columbus, Ohio, Lewis bitterly criticized the Democratic Party, defining it as the minority party.² When Roosevelt was nonetheless nominated, Lewis, using the propaganda machine of the United Mine Workers, launched a campaign for Willkie's election. The *United Mine Workers Journal* wrote that Roosevelt's re-election would be equivalent to putting American boys on troop transports to Europe. It spread the isolationist thesis that the United States could stay out of the war because it was separated from it by a vast ocean.

As the top man in Labor's Non-Partisan League, which he helped found in 1936, Lewis sought to steer the League's activity against the Democrats. However, the work the League actually did went counter to the intentions of its leader. Relying on his popularity and prestige among workers, Lewis decided to come out with an open call for labor to vote Republican. In a radio speech on October 25, 1940, he threatened to retire as president of the CIO if Willkie was defeated due to the lack of labor support. Stating his view that the election of President Roosevelt for a third term would be a national evil of the first magnitude, Lewis said, "I think that the election of Mr. Wen-

¹ *United Mine Workers Journal*, February 1, 1940, p. 7.

² *Ibid.*

dell Willkie is imperative in relation to the country's needs. I commend him to the men and women of labor and to the nation. It is obvious that President Roosevelt will not be re-elected for the third term, unless he has the overwhelming support of the men and women of labor. If he is, therefore, re-elected, it will mean that the members of the Congress of Industrial Organizations have rejected my advice and recommendation. I will accept the result as being the equivalent of a vote of no confidence, and will retire as President of the Congress of Industrial Organizations."¹

He repeated this threat on more than one occasion in later speeches, saying that if you want to lose Lewis, vote for Roosevelt, and if you want to keep Lewis, vote for Willkie.²

The stance of the CIO president caused serious friction within the CIO leadership. Lewis' opponents grouped around Sidney Hillman. Disagreements manifested themselves at a convention of CIO unions of the state of New York in September 1940. Hillman's group came out in support of Roosevelt. In protest to this line, 356 delegates headed by Allan Haywood walked out and opened their own conference. Haywood declared that the convention proceedings contravened the constitution, and Lewis said that the CIO executive board would discuss this "shameful affair". But Hillman's group turned out to have more influence in the CIO. It was supported by the leadership of a number of big unions, including the UAW and the United Steelworkers of America.

The majority of the workers did not follow Lewis. They rejected his advice to vote for Willkie and his bid to become the indisputable leader of the masses. This was confirmed by a stream of resolutions supporting Roosevelt's candidacy and telegrams from unions protesting against Lewis' position. On November 5, 1940, the majority of the American people said "yes" to Roosevelt and "no" to Willkie. Lewis had no other alternative than to carry out his threat and submit his

¹ *United Mine Workers Journal*, November 15, 1940, p. 6; *CIO 1935-1955. Industrial Democracy in Action 1955*, Washington, 1955, p. 26; Walter Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL. A History of the American Labor Movement, 1935-1941*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960, p. 59.

² See *The CIO News*, June 8, 1942.

resignation as CIO president, which he did at the third CIO convention in November of that year.

Roosevelt won the election, but Willkie gathered an impressive number of votes. Suffice it to say that of the 49.8 million votes cast, 26.8 million or 53.8 per cent were for Roosevelt, as against 22.3 million, or 44.8 per cent, for Willkie.¹ Among the latter there were many labor votes.

In looking back over the election campaigns and the part played in them by the working class and its labor unions, one cannot avoid noting a certain very typical feature in the behavior of the top labor leaders. Be they from the AFL or CIO, they always alleged that their position in the elections was an independent one. Whenever the opportunity presented itself many stressed that they preferred to stay out of politics, that they were above partisan politics and had nothing in common with either of the two bourgeois parties.

In fact, however, one group was pulling the majority of the working class over to the Democratic side, while the other was trying to get labor to back the Republicans. Each waged a struggle for influence over the workers and defended both their own interests and the interests of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie. Hillman praised Roosevelt and censured the Republicans; Lewis praised Willkie and reviled the Democrats. While fighting this verbal battle between themselves, the labor bosses remained ideological captives of the bourgeois parties.

Remaining in the White House, Roosevelt continued in 1940 and 1941 his course toward preparing the United States for war. In this, he not only relied on the Democratic Party, but made good use of eminent Republicans. And as before, he gave special attention to problems of labor. The administration's labor policy was considerably influenced by the changes taking place in the economic situation because of the war in Europe. It is very important, therefore, to consider these new trends in the nation's economy.

From the moment World War II began, big US finance capital appreciably strengthened its economic and political positions both within the country and in the capitalist world as a whole.

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1955*, Washington, 1955, p. 330.

During the years of neutrality, American monopolies launched into feverish activity in the defense industries which promised them the biggest profits. The Wall Street banks and corporations were foremost among those who reaped these profits. At the same time, they intensified the penetration of their representatives into the government apparatus to promote the expansion of defense production. Government contracts and the big subsidies that went with them were indeed an alluring prospect.

The administration devoted considerable attention to the structure of government in connection with the war situation in Europe and the new tasks that now stood before the monopolies and the government. The President frequently addressed himself to the question of adapting the government apparatus to the growing needs of the moment and making it more flexible and maneuverable. He dissolved some committees and boards, reorganized others, and set up new ones. Due to the tasks arising because of the war and the possibility of US involvement in it, the government's role and influence in the economy grew. This process went hand-in-hand with the penetration of representatives of big capital into the government apparatus, which on the whole strengthened state-monopoly capitalism in the nation's economy and politics.

In late May 1940, President Roosevelt established a National Defense Advisory Commission and appointed the president of the General Motors Corporation, William S. Knudsen, to head it. Its purpose was to help stimulate the production of war materials and to study the factors influencing production efficiency. A number of boards and divisions were set up under the Commission. Knudsen himself supervised the industrial production board; vice-president of General Motors E. Johnson headed the arms and ammunition production division; and chairman of the board of the United States Steel Corporation Edward Stettinius headed the industrial materials division. Among the heads of other divisions were Ralph Budd, president of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Co., and William Harrison, former president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.

On January 7, 1941, Roosevelt reorganized the National Defense Advisory Commission into the Office of Production

Management, again appointing William Knudsen to head it, and making Sidney Hillman its associate director-general. In accordance with Roosevelt's executive order of January 7, 1941, establishing the OPM, a labor division headed by Hillman, was organized within it on March 17. In August 1941, Stettinius became the lend-lease administrator, and Nelson Rockefeller, the eldest son of John D. Rockefeller, became US coordinator of inter-American relations.

The government's heightened role in the capitalist economy was seen not only in the construction of enterprises in various industries, especially in the defense industry, but also in open government intervention in labor relations. And it was generally not in the interests of the workers that government mediation bodies acted.

With reference to World War I, Lenin had written: "In the course of the war world capitalism has taken a forward step not only towards concentration in general, but also towards transition from monopoly in general to *state capitalism* on a much broader scale than before."¹ During World War II a new step was taken on the way of strengthening state capitalism in the economy. This was especially characteristic of the USA.

The upswing in industrial production was accompanied by technological progress. New enterprises were built and new equipment introduced. Assembly line production was improved and automation made its appearance. Technological progress in industry brought about a temporary rise in unemployment, but this was counteracted in subsequent years by the broad construction of new plants which created new jobs and by mobilization into the armed forces.

According to US Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, the country did not yet feel a shortage of skilled manpower during the years of neutrality. The Bureau of Employment also confirmed this fact in April 1940, and announced that of 3,300,000 job seekers in 33 states there were 23,000 technicians, 657,000 skilled craftsmen and 858,000 semiskilled production workers available for work.² In some industries

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 212.

² *Survey Graphic*, Magazine of Social Interpretation, July 1940, p. 384.

employment was still a little lower than in the preceding years, although this was no longer characteristic of industry as a whole.

The enactment of the Lend-Lease Act on March 11, 1941, was an important event. This was the law providing for the transfer on loan or lease of war supplies to belligerents whose resistance to the aggressor countries was vital to US defense.¹

The President was empowered to instruct the relevant government department to organize the production of war materials and the procurement of strategic raw materials and to make them available to any country whose defense the President deemed vital to the defense of the United States. On March 27 and October 28, 1941, Congress passed the first and second appropriation acts to finance lend-lease. In a message to Congress a year later, the President reported on the results of allocations made under the acts. Of the two appropriations amounting to \$12,972 million, \$12,272 million had already been allocated, \$2,838 million going into the production of aircraft, \$1,664 million into vessels, \$1,993 million into artillery, \$959 million into tanks, and so forth.²

Not surprisingly, therefore, by the end of the period of neutrality American monopolies had expanded their capacities for producing munitions and other war supplies. This brought about a further upsurge of industry and the onset of a period of war-industry boom. In the first two years of World War II, American monopolies already showed a sharp increase in profits. As compared with 1939, when profits amounted to \$6.4 billion before taxes and \$5 billion after taxes, these figures were, respectively, \$9.3 billion and \$6.4 billion in 1940, and \$17.2 billion and \$9.4 billion in 1941.³ The monopolies had even better prospects for expanding production further and deriving new profits. Quite naturally, now more than ever before they were interested in uninterrupted work of their enterprises. However, the implementation of these plans also depended on the working class which had its own material interests not coinciding with the objectives of the capitalists.

¹ See *United States Statutes at Large 1939-1941*, Vol. 54, Part I, *Public Laws*, Washington, 1942, pp. 31-33.

² *Pravda*, March 14, 1942.

³ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1953, Washington, 1953, p. 484.

CHAPTER II

CLASS CONFLICTS IN INDUSTRY

With the outbreak of war in Europe came a gradual revival of industrial production in the United States. The war and the repeal of the arms embargo gave American capital a chance to extricate itself from the long period of economic crises and depression of the 1930s.

In November 1939, the Federal Reserve Board reported that US industrial activity continued to mount, and that industrial output had already surpassed the highest point during the 1929 boom.¹ Industrial production growth continued in 1940 and 1941. The production index rose from 38.3 in 1939 to 56.4 in 1941.² The defense industry increased particularly. The defeat of France and the precarious situation of Britain were more than sufficient stimulus to increase defense appropriations and expand arms production.

The industrialists were constantly expanding production to meet the needs of the powers fighting against Nazi Germany. Civilian industries increasingly gave way to defense production, the latter accounting for 18 per cent of total output in 1941.³ The production upswing was due not only to greater private investment but also to the increase of government defense spending: from \$1.2 billion of an \$8.8 billion budget in

1939, to \$6.7 billion of a \$13.2 billion budget in 1941. In 1940 and 1941 there was a sharp increase in the rate of production in the coal, oil, gas, electrical, steel, shipbuilding, aircraft, automobile, aluminium and many other industries.

It would seem that with industry on the upgrade and unemployment dropping, conditions were being created for an abatement of the class struggle. But such was not the case. The working class continued its struggle against the encroachments of capital upon its living standard. Many hundreds of thousands were involved in work stoppages. The strike movement reached a high level in the years of neutrality, especially in 1941, as can be seen from the following figures¹:

	1940	1941
Work stoppages	2,508	4,288
Workers involved (in thousands)	577	2,360
Man-days idle (in millions)	6.7	23.0

It will be recalled that under the Black-Connery Wages and Hours Act of 1938 the minimum wage in 1940 and 1941 was set at 30 cents an hour. But this applied to only 13 million workers engaged in interstate commerce.² On February 3, 1941, the US Supreme Court held the law constitutional. Under the provisions of the law, a 40-hour workweek was to go into effect starting October 23, 1940, as a result of which the minimum weekly wage would be only \$12, or, calculated on the basis of 50 weeks, \$600 a year.

Of course, not all workers coming under the 1938 law were making 30 cents an hour. The law merely set the minimum beyond which wages could not drop. This minimum was used by the labor unions as a point of departure in the struggle for higher wages. Therefore, wage rates were in fact much higher than the official minimum in different industries and in different companies, and the differences depended on how well organized the workers were.

¹ *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957*, Washington, 1960, p. 414.

² Л. Я. Берри, К. И. Клименко, Я. Л. Обломский, Э. С. Савинский, С. А. Хейнман, *Промышленность США в 1929-1963 гг.*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 20-21.

³ *Labor Fact Book 6*, New York, 1943, p. 12.

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1953*, p. 222.

² *The History of the Shorter Workday*, New York Labor Research Association, 1942, p. 38.

The differences were exceedingly great both within each industry and among the various job categories. For example, in the manufacturing industries the average hourly wage rate in 1939 was 63.3 cents, while in 1941 it rose to 72.9 cents, which corresponded to a weekly wage of \$23.86 and \$29.58 respectively.¹ With full employment during 50 weeks this amounted to \$1,193 and \$1,479 a year. In this group of industries there was a great disparity between the wages of workers producing durable and those producing non-durable goods.

In contrast to wages in manufacturing, the average weekly wage in construction was \$30.39 in 1939 and \$35.14 in 1941,² which amounted to \$1,519 and \$1,757 a year. However, in this industry the lowest hourly rates ranged between 50 and 62 cents, which even with a 40-hour week amounted to only \$20 a week, or \$1,000 a year. But the top rates here reached \$1.50 an hour, or \$60 a week and \$3,000 a year.³ In the coal industry the weekly wages in 1939 averaged \$23.88 and on first-class railroads, where the number of work hours was higher than in the mines, they amounted to \$30.99.⁴ Wages in wholesale and retail trade and some public utilities had roughly the same range. However, there were other areas of work where average wages fell with amazing rapidity. Suffice it to say that in the services field (laundry work, for example), wages dropped in 1939 and 1941 to \$17.64 and \$18.69 a week, or to \$872 and \$934 per year.⁵

Differences in wages depended also on skill, sex, race and also on particular regions where the cost of living fluctuated sharply. The International Hod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers Union of America reported in September 1941 that wages for these groups of workers were extremely low. Only as the result of stubborn struggle did it win a wage

¹ *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957*, p. 92.

² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³ WSHS Library, William Green Papers, Madison, 1936-1942, Box No. 3 (Wage Agreement Between District of Columbia Construction Workers District Conference and Construction Industry Employers Incorporated).

⁴ *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957*, p. 93.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 94 (annual wages calculated by the author).

increase to 40, and later to 50 cents an hour. At best, this amounted to from \$16 to \$20 a week, or from \$800 to \$1,000 a year.

Differences were especially striking when average earnings were compared with the higher hourly rates and weekly and annual earnings of skilled workers in heavy industry, especially the organized workers.

The Labor Research Association reported that in 1940 the average weekly wage was \$26 (\$1,300 a year), with wages ranging between \$17 a week, or \$680 a year in the textile industry, and \$34 a week, or \$1,700 a year in the transportation industry (trucking).¹ The above average weekly and annual earnings in industry become meaningful only when considered in relation to the cost of living, that is, to the total annual expenses necessary for an average American family of four to get by. In 1939, this sum approximated \$2,000.² It was apparent, therefore, that incomes lagged well behind the cost of living. During the years of US neutrality the cost of living continued to rise.

A book on the history of the United Auto Workers describes the hard life in Detroit, the center of the automobile industry. The Detroiters, it said, did heavy work, yet their wages were barely enough to maintain a modest standard of living for a family of four. The housing conditions were especially poor. In 1940, 34 per cent of the dwellings occupied by Negroes were substandard, and over 90,000 families in Detroit lived in such houses.³ But that city was not an exception.

Owing to such factors as growing employment, a declining unemployment rate, higher wages, more family members working, and the payment of a time-and-a-half rate for overtime, the gap between family income and the subsistence minimum during the years of neutrality began to narrow noticeably.

At first glance it may seem strange that the upturn in

¹ *Labor Fact Book 5*, New York, 1941, p. 65 (annual wages calculated by the author).

² *The CIO News*, November 13, 1939.

³ Irving Howe and B. J. Widick, *The UAW and Walter Reuther*, New York, 1949, pp. 15, 17-18.

industry and growth of employment intensified the struggle for higher wages. However, this is explained by the fact that the country had entered a period of war-production boom, under the impact of which the correlation between labor power supply and demand was shifting in favor of the workers. In such periods, the workers, especially in the low-paid bracket, were even more apt to take the offensive against the monopolies, demanding higher wages and better working conditions.

As concerns the position taken on the strike struggle by the top officials of the AFL central bodies, many of them not only did nothing to help the workers win their demands from the monopolies, but often suppressed the initiative of individual unions and locals. Moreover, they came out against the initiative of the Communists and the CIO, who called on the workers to launch a broad strike movement. At the same time, they sought to inhibit the strikers' hope for success.

The shipbuilding industry acquired tremendous importance due to the war in Europe and big government contracts for building naval and merchant vessels during the years of neutrality. The companies and the government were extremely interested in seeing that the shipyards on both coasts worked without interruptions. The monopolies, it should be emphasized, sought to achieve uninterrupted production without observing the interests of the workers and in violation of collective agreements. As a result, labor disputes arose from place to place, many of which ended in strikes.

One of these sharp confrontations took place in the shipyards of the Federal Ship Building and Drydock Company in Kearny, New Jersey. The strikers were led by the shipbuilding union (CIO). After the monopoly refused to conclude a new contract, the union called a strike on August 7, 1941, and 16,000 workers stopped work. On August 8, company president met with the head of the labor division of the Office of Production Management, Sidney Hillman, and representatives of the Department of the Navy to discuss the union demands. Among these was the demand that management accept the closed shop. The company's refusal to hire only union members was the main cause of the strike. As early as May 23, 1941, Local 16 of the union had proposed a new

contract, which was to replace the one due to expire on June 24.

The management agreed to a 12 per cent wage increase. The negotiations, with the participation of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, ended with agreement on all points of the new contract except the demand for a closed shop, which the monopoly categorically rejected. It stuck to its position even after the MCS recommended that the demand be recognized as just. The management responded by saying that this proposal contravened the principle of free hiring and the right to work, which should not depend on a worker's belonging to one or another organization.

The company's intractability led to a strike. The call was supported by 12,000 shipbuilders in Camden, New Jersey. Now that the strike threatened to assume large proportions, the government intervened, and the Department of the Navy took control of the shipyards and maintained it for 19 weeks. The dispute was continued at meetings of the National Labor Relations Board. By that time, the United States had already entered the war against the Axis countries.

It was only on May 8, 1942, that the union called off the strike, after the corporation recognized all the workers' demands and signed a collective contract in which, along with a wage increase and improved working conditions, the main point was the company's acceptance of the principle of hiring only union members.

In May 1941, a strike by members of the International Association of Machinists broke out in San Francisco. It was directed against the Bethlehem Ship Building Corporation, which for more than a quarter-century had put up stubborn resistance to the efforts of the union to draw unorganized workers into its ranks. The immediate cause of the strike was Bethlehem's refusal to sign a contract proposed by the Association. Four other ship-repairing companies followed suit, refusing to sign a collective contract.

How did William Green in Washington react to this strike? Speaking on May 11 before a meeting of the American Legion in Patterson, New Jersey, he declared that members of the International Association of Machinists in San Francisco had called an illegal strike that was not sanctioned by the union's

central leadership. He demanded that the union call it off immediately, and that the workers return to work and in future try to gain satisfaction of their demands by peaceful means. Harvey W. Brown, president of the IAM, was indignant over the AFL president's statements. He emphasized that the strike that Green had condemned was legal and sanctioned by the executive committee of the Association.

In other industries, workers also continued to wage a struggle for higher wages and the recognition of newly created unions.

The power structure was disturbed most of all by the coal miners' strikes which embraced the entire industry. Back in 1933, the United Mine Workers (UMW) succeeded in getting the mineowners to sign the so-called Appalachian Wage Agreement, which set wages at \$5.00 a day in the North and \$4.60 in the South. It remained in force for many years even though the cost of living kept rising and labor intensity and productivity had increased. The contracts of 1937 failed to introduce anything new into the substance of that agreement.

The 1937 contracts were due to expire in 1941. The miners demanded that the new contract establish a basic daily wage of \$7.00, a standard workday, and no North-South differential. This differential meant lower wages for all workers in the South, Black and white alike. It is not surprising therefore that all the miners in the southern states were fighting to equalize their wages with those of miners in the northern mines.

The employers rejected the miners' demands, agreeing to only \$5.00 a day. This led to a general strike of 400,000 miners in the coal industry in early 1941. The mineowners of the North, where almost 70 per cent of the nation's coal was mined, were compelled to negotiate with the miners, but the southern mineowners continued to resist.

Negotiations began on March 11 and continued, with a break, until July 5. The long strike put the miners into an extremely difficult position. Nonetheless they held on staunchly, refusing to go down into the mines until their demands were met. The stubbornness of the disputing parties led to a breakdown in negotiations. At that point, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service intervened, but it could not move the mineowners to satisfy the miners' demands either.

The mineowners and coal companies, displeased with the pressure put on them by the MCS, filed a complaint with the NLRB. The conflict deepened and the mines remained idle. Finally, Roosevelt and Secretary of Labor Perkins used their authority to compel the mineowners to resume negotiations.

On April 29, the northern coal companies signed a temporary agreement. As for the southern mineowners, they remained unwilling to agree to the wage rates introduced in the North. The struggle continued. On June 19, a contract was signed with the mineowners of Northern Appalachia, and on July 5, with the companies in the South, under which the miners won a daily wage of \$7.00, paid vacations, and a release from the obligation to use company stores. It was an important victory for the miners.

"Either Henry Ford recognizes the union, or he'll have no automobiles." It was under this slogan that the workers in the Ford Motor Company plants embarked upon a decisive struggle in 1941. Their action opened a new phase in the fight to create one of the most powerful unions in the country. A big role in organizing this union was played by the Congress of Industrial Organizations and Local 600 at the Ford plants in Dearborn, Michigan. The workers faced an economically powerful and politically influential company with extensive experience in suppressing strikes.

In a book about Henry Ford, historian Allan Nevins tries to convince his readers that Ford sincerely concerned himself about the well-being of the workers and strove to establish a "fair minimum" wage of \$5.00 a day. In a word, as Nevins maintains, the Ford Company possessed "the most advanced labor policy in the world".¹

The *Time* magazine wrote that in 1941, when the CIO surrounded the River Rouge plant with pickets and barricades, Henry Ford suddenly promised the workers that he would not only negotiate with the union, but would give it everything it wanted, including his agreement not to hire non-union workers.²

¹ Allan Nevins, *Ford. The Times, the Man, the Company*, New York, 1954, p. 541.

² See *Time*, New York, May 18, 1953, p. 46.

In reality, everything came out quite differently from the way bourgeois historians and press pictured it. There was nothing sudden about the fact that Ford was soon compelled to capitulate in the face of the onslaught of the union and its striking organized workers. The capitulation was preceded by a fierce struggle, and Ford was by no means as kindly a person as Nevins and the *Time* magazine made him out to be. *Ford Facts*, the periodical of Local 600, proved this quite conclusively when it exposed the methods the company used to exploit the workers, and compared the profits it made with the wages it paid. Addressing the workers, the paper asked: "How much do you contribute to Henry Ford? Take your pencil and figure out your yearly gift to Ford."¹

While General Motors and Chrysler workers were getting more than \$8.00 a day, the average daily wage at the Ford plants was \$7.25. This meant that with a five-day week, the Ford workers were getting \$3.75 a week less than General Motors and Chrysler workers. "Over a year," the labor paper pointed out, "you Ford workers who work 45 weeks a year receive \$168.00 less than the UAW CIO workers in GM and Chrysler. Multiply that \$168.00 dollars by the 90,000 Ford workers and you have the amount of your total annual gift to Henry Ford—\$15,120,000."²

Of course, there was more to the matter than merely Ford's edge over General Motors and Chrysler. The union paper did not go into the more complex and covert mechanics of worker exploitation by which the company reaped vast profits from their labor.

The higher hourly wage rates and annual earnings of the workers at GM and Chrysler plants were a concession exacted by the workers through fierce struggle. In early 1941, the Ford workers decided to follow the same path. The fight was led by the United Auto Workers (CIO).

At that time the UAW had 660 contracts covering 450,000 workers. In December 1940, the union had 356,644 members or twice as many as in December 1939, when its membership

¹ *Ford Facts*, February 5, 1941.

² *Ibid.*

stood at 167,500.¹ The UAW demanded acceptance by the Ford Company of the closed shop principle, higher wages, and lower assembly line speed. It came out against the tyranny exercised by plant guards, who numbered over 3,000 in those years, and also against the company's espionage activities in the plants.

The union also devoted much attention to the struggle to gain equal status for Negro workers at the Ford plants and to eliminate the flagrant jimcrowism in hiring and firing, working conditions and wages. According to *Ford Facts*, ten per cent of the workers at the Ford plants were Negroes. The paper noted that of the 9,825 Negroes working at the Ford plants, 6,457 were doing the heaviest jobs, especially in the foundry and rolling shops and at open furnaces. They received bottom wages. This is confirmed by the wage scale for Negro workers in the Ford-owned Briggs Manufacturing Company. There, the lowest rates ranged between 25 and 60 cents an hour for the various jobs that had become the "privilege" of Negroes. Therefore, their earnings did not exceed \$10 a week, or \$500 a year. And this at a time when the average wage rate of white workers at all the Ford plants was 90 cents an hour, or \$36 a week and \$1,800 a year.²

Over a period of 50 years, Negroes had tried to join the AFL, but largely without success because the constitutions of 12 AFL international unions openly banned their acceptance.³ In contrast to this policy, the CIO-affiliated UAW vigorously defended the interests of Negroes. The constitution adopted at its convention in 1940 stated its intention to unite into one organization, regardless of religion, race, creed, color, political affiliation, or nationality, all employees under the jurisdiction of that union. Negro workers believed in the sincerity of the union's intentions, entered into its ranks, and were active participants in the union-led strike struggle of the Ford workers.

In an effort to frighten the workers, Ford began firing union activists. The union came out in defense of those dismissed and

¹ *Ibid.*, May 17, 1941.

² *Ibid.*, March 19, 1941.

³ *Ibid.*, April 23, 1941.

demanded their reinstatement. The company refused, and the workers had to fight. In February 1941, at meetings in River Rouge and Lincoln they decided to strike. R. J. Thomas, President of the UAW-CIO, wrote: "Under the circumstances, the Ford workers and our organization find no other alternative than to give the customary notice of intention to strike. We prefer the methods of conciliation and collective bargaining...."¹

The protest movement mounted. The union press warned the company that the struggle against Ford would not stop until he recognized the workers' rights and equalized their wages with those at GM, Chrysler and other auto companies.²

One important feature of the movement should be stressed: the determination of the workers to fight for the highest wage scale already paid in some industry or company to be made standard for all. Strikes were a means of levelling wages on the basis of some average hourly rate. As shown earlier, this is what happened in the coal industry, where the miners got rid of the North-South differential.

The Ford strike was a similar example. The average wage at Ford was five cents less than for the entire industry and more than ten cents less than at Chrysler and GM. However, Ford was adamant in his decision not to recognize the union. He used every stratagem he could to keep workers from joining the union.³

One of these stratagems was to increase the wages of certain categories of workers before he was compelled to recognize the union. Professor John Dunlop of Harvard University wrote: "An organizing drive will be more apt to succeed if prospective members can be convinced that they will immediately benefit from affiliation. And there can be no more convincing demonstration of this benefit than a wage increase."⁴ Therefore, not only Ford but many other employers, in an effort to frustrate the success of one or another union organizing drive,

¹ *Ford Facts*, March 5, 1941.

² *Ibid.*, May 17, 1941.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ John T. Dunlop, *Wage Determination under Trade Unions*, New York, 1944, p. 46.

were not averse to raising wages themselves before the labor organization was recognized. Of course, the capitalists granted wage increases that were more advantageous to themselves than those for which the union was fighting.

However, the striking workers and their union were not deceived by these compromises and half-measures. The experience of many years of struggle strengthened their solidarity. They staunchly picketed the plants, carrying posters declaring, "No contract, no work!" Ford resorted to hired guards and strikebreakers, who made attacks upon the strikers. When these measures did not produce the desired results, Ford began to look for support from the courts. However, there too he suffered defeat, for the courts were forced, in accordance with the Wagner Act, to rule that Ford was obliged to recognize the union, reinstate the 23 fired workers, pay them compensation, and conclude a collective contract with Local 600 of the UAW.

Communists and other left elements took an active part in the preparations for and conduct of the strike. *Ford Facts* and thousands of leaflets were distributed at the gates of the plants, on the picket lines and in city streets in Michigan. They exposed the allegations spread by Ford's admirers saying that Ford was a philanthropist, that he helped the needy, and was ready to produce munitions for the country without concern for profits (!), if other companies supported his patriotic effort.¹

The first big strike in the history of the giant Henry Ford enterprise in River Rouge broke out on April 2. It was militant and offensive in character and lasted 10 days. It ended on April 12 in a victory for the union, which won reinstatement of the fired workers and the company's agreement to negotiate a collective contract. The contract was signed on June 21, 1941.

Under the contract, the workers won the same wage as was received by workers in other automobile companies. In addition, Ford accepted the principle that workers were obliged to join the union within a month after being hired, recognized their right to receive certain seniority benefits and agreed to pay a time-and-a-half rate for overtime work and premium pay for night work.

¹ See *Ford Facts*, February 5, 1941.

The CIO United Auto Workers union was opposed by an AFL union carrying the same name. An overwhelming majority of the workers chose the CIO. The democratic principles of the CIO were a strong factor in rallying unorganized workers, as could be seen from the results of referendums held between January 1939 and May 1941¹ in the various companies:

	CIO	AFL
General Motors	86,868	26,504
Chrysler	40,908	5,005
Briggs	13,301	1,052
Packard	6,094	1,457
Motor Products	2,033	188
Kelsey-Hayes	2,457	0
Total	151,661	34,206
Other companies	190,476	45,571

In May 1941, a similar survey was made by the National Labor Relations Board at the Ford plants in River Rouge and Lincoln. In a mass referendum in River Rouge, 51,866 workers supported the CIO, and 20,364 the AFL; the vote in Lincoln was 2,008 to 587.² The CIO won out in the struggle against Ford and emerged victorious over the AFL.

Sixty thousand Ford workers gathered in Cadillac Square on May 20, 1941, to mark this major success in joining their forces for the struggle against Ford. CIO vice-president Murray, president of the UAW (CIO) R. J. Thomas, the Black singer Paul Robeson and others spoke at the meeting. Murray stressed that the CIO organized workers regardless of race, nationality or religion. He said that the CIO would never take the course of politically ostracizing minority groups and would devote its entire activity to the emancipation of all workers.³

The actions of the Ford workers were a vivid example of the sharp class struggle in industry during the years of neutrality. They were a continuation of the mass movement for industrial

¹ *Ford Facts*, May 2, 1941.

² *The CIO News*, May 26, 1941; *United Mine Workers Journal*, June 1, 1941, p. 8.

³ See *The CIO News*, May 26, 1941.

unions and the democratic and independent development of the labor movement.

The strikes that broke out at various aircraft and ship-building enterprises were local in character. They were led by locals of the International Association of Machinists (AFL) and the United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (CIO). The struggle took place at plants of the Boeing Airplane Co. in Seattle, the North American Aviation Inc. in Los Angeles, and the shipyards of the Bethlehem Ship Building Corporation in San Francisco.

Unpublished documents from the office of the AFL executive council, now kept in the Library of Congress, and a number of newspaper reports shed light on the methods used both by the leaders of the AFL and the government to suppress these strikes.

After receiving a large government contract for heavy bombers in the summer of 1940, the Boeing Airplane Co. increased work loads without a corresponding hourly wage increase. IAM Local 751 called a strike at the end of July, demanding a halt to the practice of unilaterally revising work loads which resulted in greater labor intensification and a worsening of living conditions. They elected a committee to lead the strike. General leadership was carried out by the executive committee of the local.

The strike broke out against the will of the AFL officialdom which immediately took steps to quash it, maintaining that it was triggered by an "anti-government" action on the part of progressive figures in the local.

The course of the struggle revealed the direct links between the AFL leadership, agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and such government agencies as the Immigration and Naturalization Commission and the Defense Department.

The entire work of suppressing the strike on the part of the AFL was done by one John Ph. Frey, head of the Federation's Department of Metal Workers. Upon instructions of AFL president William Green he came on an unofficial visit to Seattle, where, according to his own testimony, he immediately got in contact with FBI Division Chief S. J. Drayton, inspector of Immigration and Naturalization J. H. Zumwalt, and Defense

Department representative Major John Corkille.¹ After discussing with them a plan to liquidate the strike, Frey went into action against the executive committee of the union local.

The John Ph. Frey Papers in the Library of Congress contain letters showing the methods he used in the struggle against the worker activists at that plant. Frey saw a "Red danger" everywhere, and he declared any strike to be the doing of Communists. Frey's letters confirm the fact that he had, not only in this plant but in others, in various states as well, a broad network of informers who regularly supplied him with information about the activity of Communists and left-wing activists in the trade unions. "Through certain sources of information which I had before leaving for Seattle," he wrote, "I was able to contact a member of the Communist Party in the higher brackets in the Seattle organization, who works in the Boeing plant."² With the help of such informers in the union local and the Communist unit, Frey was able to learn whether one or another union activist was a Party member, and then hastened to relay this information to the top officials of that man's union. For instance, he informed the national leadership of the IAM that three of the fifteen members of the executive committee of the Seattle local were Communists, and that there was a Party committee in the plant, consisting of nine members, whose names he would report as soon as he got the information from "his men" at the plant.

Fighting against CIO-organized strikes, Frey and other AFL leaders on more than one occasion publicly accused strikers of anti-government actions. This device was calculated to intimidate the workers. During the years of neutrality, when the no-strike pledge had not yet been made and the monopolies were waging an offensive on the living standard of the workers and deriving ever increasing profits, neither Frey nor AFL president Green felt any qualms about blatantly accusing workers of engaging in "outlaw strikes".

In its efforts to avert or settle disputes, the government made wide use of mediation and intervention in labor

¹ The Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, John Ph. Frey Papers, Container 2, Folder 13, John Ph. Frey to Harvey W. Brown, July 29, 1940, p. 2.

² *Ibid.*

relations. The Conciliation Service had its representatives everywhere, and they went out of their way to hinder, and wherever possible stifle, the mass strike movement. To enhance the government's role in labor relations Roosevelt on March 19, 1941 created the National Defense Mediation Board.¹ Among the members of the board were four labor representatives (two each from the AFL and the CIO) and four employer representatives. Clarence A. Dykstra, a big industrialist, was appointed chairman. The executive order creating the board stated that its job included settling labor disputes by means of negotiations with the management of companies and enterprises in the defense industry, and handling disputes that could not be settled by the Conciliation Service.

There were also cases in which the government and the President called in the army to intervene in labor disputes in the defense industry. In June 1941, troops were called in to suppress a strike at a North American Aviation Inc. plant in Inglewood, California. The UAW (CIO), which also united workers in the aircraft industry was demanding a new minimum hourly wage of 75 cents instead of the existing 50 cents. The company rejected the demand. Local 683 in Los Angeles called a strike. Bourgeois propaganda ascribed the strike to Communist intrigues, and the Dies Committee in the House of Representatives immediately charged that the union was pursuing a policy of sabotage.

The dispute drew the attention of the government and the President himself. With the consent of CIO vice-president and head of the labor division of the Office of Production Management Sidney Hillman, Attorney General Robert H. Jackson and the President's closest advisor Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt issued an order for the dispatch of troops and government seizure of the plant. A force of 3,500 soldiers dispersed the pickets and occupied the plant.

The economic upswing and the intensified strike movement made for an improvement in the living standard of the workers as compared with the 1930s. However, the industrialists, expanding their production, kept raising the output rates

¹ Joel Seidman, *American Labor from Defense to Reconversion*, Chicago, 1953, p. 45.

without increasing wages. It was against this policy that the workers were fighting.

The years of neutrality saw a rise both in employment and in wages. In September 1941, Murray reported that in the preceding six months alone the total wage fund for CIO workers had increased by \$800 million as a result of the broad movement for higher wages. This affected unorganized workers to a somewhat lesser extent, but among them, too, the higher wages were in evidence. The biggest results of this rise were felt in the defense industries, where major companies received contracts for munitions and other materials.

Realizing that US entry in the war against Germany, Italy and Japan was inevitable, the government was disturbed by the increasing subversive activity by agents of these countries. There was growing public concern over pro-fascist and reactionary organizations like the German-American Bund, the Italian Fascist Clubs, the Japanese Military Servicemen's League and the Fate of America Party. It has been estimated that over 700 such organizations were operating in the United States during the war. Most of them more or less openly expressed their sympathies with the Hitler regime and acted in its favor, being secretly linked with the German, Italian or Japanese intelligence services. During the years of neutrality espionage became an even more serious danger than was the case in prior years.

The administration and Congress began drawing up legislation directed against foreign intelligence agents. One such measure was the Alien Registration Act passed by Congress on June 28, 1940, which came to be known as the Smith Act (the author of the bill was Howard W. Smith, a Democratic member of the House of Representatives from the state of Virginia).

The crux of the law was spelled out in Section 1, which said: "It shall be unlawful for any person, with intent to interfere with, impair, or influence the loyalty, morale, or discipline of the military or naval forces of the United States:

"—to advise, counsel, urge, or in any manner cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty by any member of the military or naval forces of the United States."¹

¹ *United States Statutes at Large 1939-1941*, Vol. 54, Part I, p. 670.

The law banned the distribution for these purposes of any written or printed matter.

Section 2 of the law stated: "It shall be unlawful for any person—to knowingly or willfully advocate, abet, advise, or teach the duty, necessity, desirability, or propriety of overthrowing or destroying any government in the United States by force or violence, or by the assassination of any officer of any such government."¹ It was made unlawful to publish or distribute materials calling for the overthrow of the government or "to organize or help to organize any society, group, or assembly of persons who teach, advocate, or encourage the overthrow or destruction of any government in the United States by force or violence".² Section 5 prescribed the punitive measures to be taken against persons found guilty of these crimes. "Any person who violates any of the provisions of this title shall, upon conviction thereof, be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned for not more than ten years, or both."³

The law set down rules for issuing visas to aliens for entry to and residence in the United States. Among the main requirements were mandatory registration and fingerprinting of aliens. Moreover, the registration procedure included the presentation of certain information under oath. Violations of these provisions were punishable by a \$1,000 fine or six months' imprisonment, or both. On the basis of the Immigration Act of February 5, 1917, violators were subject to deportation to the country from which they came.⁴

Such was the substance of the Smith Act. During World War II it was directed against espionage and subversive organizations of the fascist countries; however, it was later used by reactionary circles in the struggle against progressive, democratic working-class organizations, particularly the Communist Party.

In the meantime, reactionary legislators in the halls of Capitol intensified their anti-labor propaganda. Various anti-union bills were introduced in the committees and houses

¹ *Ibid.* p. 671.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 673, 674, 675.

of Congress. This was particularly characteristic of the 77th Congress in 1941.

Time and again, charges were levelled against the Communist Party and other democratic elements from the floor of both houses of Congress. Representative Clare Hoffman of Michigan, an old Red-baiter, continued his attacks on the CIO and the Communist Party. He lashed out against one CIO union in these words: "This CIO union is doing the work of Hitler just as certainly, just as effectively, in fact, more effectively, than if its members were enrolled in his armed forces. They are betraying their country."¹

Militant workers were accused of being subversive, unpatriotic, and un-American. Congressman Voorhis, the author of the law prohibiting the Communist Party from maintaining international ties, claimed that all strikes in the United States were inspired and run by the Communists. In the House of Representatives he came out for expelling the Communists from the ranks of labor, and added at this point: "We should assist the leaders of the A.F. of L., we should assist Phil Murray in the things he said recently, we should support every constructive leader and man in the ranks of labor in this important and essential job."²

At the height of the strike struggle in 1941, the House of Representatives considered many bills aimed at curtailing the rights of labor. Thus, a bill proposed by Congressman Carl Vinson (Rep., Georgia) envisaged banning strikes, with violations punishable by fine and imprisonment. Congressmen Dirksen, Ford and Hobbs proposed bills prohibiting strike votes among workers, introducing compulsory arbitration and black lists, and providing for the punishment of strike organizers right up to imprisonment.

Many congressmen who themselves were far from having any sympathies with the progressive forces acknowledged the existence of an anti-labor atmosphere in Congress. Congressman Samuel Dickstein, speaking in the House of Representatives, said: "...there is much hysteria through the Nation today on the subject of strikes in industry. This hysteria is seen more

¹ CR, June 6, 1941, p. 4818.

² *Ibid.*, June 9, 1941, pp. 4898-99.

clearly in the press, in inspired editorials, and among certain groups of this Congress." Characterizing the situation in Congress, he said, "we have an atmosphere of hysteria against organized labor, an atmosphere that I regret to note has swept Congress to the point of seriously considering passage of bills that would destroy labor's right to organize, would destroy labor's right to bargain collectively, would destroy labor's right to strike."¹

Dissatisfaction with the activity of Congress grew. A *Washington Post* article entered into the Congressional Record said that "the opposition to the Vinson bill has assumed formidable proportions. Organized labor has taken a united stand against the measure."² In a speech in the House of Representatives in the summer of 1941, Congressman Vito Marcantonio, a prominent figure in the American Labor Party of the state of New York, exposed the proponents of repressive anti-strike bills. He said: "You will only be making the exploitation of labor worse than it is and you will be forcing American workers into a condition of civil war simply because you stand here and under the influence of hysteria you seek to protect the employers who are making millions, and millions, and millions of dollars of profits.... Curtail the right to strike and you force American labor into a condition of compulsory labor."³

In response to the increased activity of the democratic forces coming out with an exposure of the anti-labor policy, the reactionaries in Congress did not delay in undertaking still another action against the unions. Soon after Marcantonio's speech, Senator Tom Connally (Dem., Texas) introduced an amendment to the Universal Military Conscription Law of 1940, which would empower the government to seize any plant turning out munitions or other war materials whenever a strike or "labor unrest" caused a production stoppage, whereupon the plant would be operated for a specific period of time under government control.⁴ The amendment was passed on June 12, 1941. Its approval by Congress meant recognition of the right

¹ *Ibid.*, April 30, 1941, pp. 3472, 3473.

² *Ibid.*, March 17-May 20, 1941, Appendix, p. A1868.

³ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1941, p. 4839.

⁴ *Ibid.*, June 12, 1941, p. 5071.

of the government to intervene in labor disputes in the defense industry. To a certain extent, this laid the groundwork for the Smith-Connally Anti-Strike Act which was to be passed in 1943.

Still, as we shall see later, no matter how hard they tried to stop it, the strike struggle continued in the years that followed. However, 1941 was drawing to a close, and the country was on the brink of entering World War II. This had a decisive influence on the sentiments of the American people in general and the working class in particular.

CHAPTER III

THE TURN FROM NEUTRALITY TO WAR AGAINST FASCISM

As more and more European, African and Asian countries were drawn into the war, the conviction grew among American workers that the United States, too, would not remain on the sidelines. Instrumental in the collapse of neutralist illusions were, first, the end of the "phony war" and, as a result, the defeat of France, Belgium and Holland, the occupation of Norway and Denmark, and the entrance of Italy into the war; second, Nazi Germany's attack on the USSR and the beginning of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people; and third, the collapse of Japanese-American negotiations and Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. A direct threat was posed to Great Britain, which stood face to face with Nazi Germany, powerful, drunk with its military successes and now in control of almost all of Western Europe.

American workers became more and more sharply aware of the inevitability of US entry into the war: the White House was sending message after message to the Capitol with proposals for new defense appropriations and additional taxes.

Although the unions continued their campaign of protest against involvement in the war, more and more labor organizations pledged their support of the administration and the Democratic Party. In 1941, when Roosevelt entered his third term as president, a number of unions openly and unequivocally expressed themselves in favor of national defense measures. Voices could be heard urging US intervention on the side of Britain. More and more often appeals were

made to the government to arm American merchant ships and to give them naval escorts.

At conventions of AFL and CIO unions, the attitude to the war was now formulated as a matter of strengthening national defense. The delegates to the third convention of the United Office and Professional Workers of America (CIO), for example, declared in September 1940: "We support wholeheartedly the vigorous and forthright declaration on peace and national defense made by the CIO and its President, John L. Lewis. We are determined to keep out of this war."¹

The third convention of the CIO was held November 18 to 22, 1940 in Atlantic City. This was an important event in the life of the democratic wing of the labor movement. Taking part in the proceedings were 438 delegates, representing almost four million members. John L. Lewis, who was still the CIO president, delivered the report of the executive committee, in which he said that the CIO, its officers and the mass of union members were fully prepared to meet their responsibilities at that crucial moment in the life of the nation, that the CIO stood in the forefront of defense, and that the workers in the organization would increase their output in the mines and plants.

At the same time, the convention still supported US neutrality. A resolution on preserving peace and safeguarding democratic institutions said that more than ever before the people were determined to keep the country from being involved in foreign wars, and that America should not participate in any international adventures that might draw it into the war. It said that the eternal vigilance of organized labor should become the main guarantee that 1917 would not be repeated and that peace and national security would be ensured.²

The convention raised the question of profiteering in the defense industry. It devoted particular attention to abuses connected with the granting of government contracts. A resolution on war and profiteering said: "...this Convention

¹ *A Summary of the Proceedings of the Third Convention of the United Office and Professional Workers, CIO*, Chicago, August 31-September 6, 1940, p. 264.

² *CIO, Proceedings*, 1940, p. 227 (1917 was the year the United States entered World War I).

condemns profiteering in the national defense as contrary to the public interest and authorizes and directs the executive officers of the CIO to formulate measures looking toward the control of profits by the Federal Government through such measures as profit limitations in government contracts."¹

One convention resolution condemned fascism but at the same time put an equal sign between Nazism and communism. This approach indicated sharply conflicting tendencies within the CIO, an omen of future complications. There were elements in the CIO leadership who were interested in seeing the entire activity of the organization assume an anti-Soviet orientation. Despite the prevalence of democratic sentiments in the CIO during the war, these rightist leaders from time to time succeeded in pushing through resolutions which, albeit not directly, rejected the idea of joint actions with the Soviet Union.

A change in leadership took place at this convention. John L. Lewis, who along with the Republican Party had suffered defeat in the 1940 elections, had to resign as CIO president. He recommended as successor one of his closest associates, vice-president of the United Mine Workers Philip Murray. In naming Murray, Lewis hoped to have a reliable man through whom he could continue to influence the CIO, particularly since the mine workers' union headed by Lewis held strong positions. He was counting on Murray in the matter of supporting the Republicans.

Publicist John Steuben later wrote in the labor magazine *March of Labor*, that "Philip Murray belongs to the old school of conservative labor leaders who believe that the interests of labor and capital are alike, and that it is possible, even desirable, to establish a partnership between employers and labor unions".²

Murray was to head the CIO for twelve years until his death in 1952. Unlike Green, Harrison, Hutcheson and other leaders of the old school, he was more circumspect and flexible, capable of making temporary compromises with the left wing of the labor movement. A convinced opponent of communism,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 218 (see Resolution No. 23).

² *March of Labor*, October-November 1952, p. 4.



Philip Murray, President of the CIO (1940-1952) and President of the United Steelworkers of America (1936-1952)

he did not, however, totally shun joint actions with the Communist Party on certain important issues, particularly during the war.

Due to his position he felt free to criticize the monopolies on questions of profits, wage policies, working conditions, cost of living and labor legislation. In other words, he criticized them within the framework of a liberal bourgeois policy. Murray looked for agreements with the monopolies that would be favorable to labor and avoided sharp confrontations.

Murray also gained repute in the CIO unions for his tendency to stress his democratic spirit; he frequently made promising statements about defending the freedom of political views and party affiliation. To complete this thumbnail sketch, we should mention his close ties with Catholic circles.

Such was the new leader of the CIO, chosen by the third convention. He did not live up to Lewis' expectations, for Murray supported the Democrats and Roosevelt's policies, and called on the workers to increase their vigilance and strengthen the nation's defenses to be prepared for the possible entry of the United States into the war against Nazi Germany.

The defeat of France and the British retreat at Dunkirk brought the military situation in Western Europe to a critical low. Hitler was preparing an attack on the Soviet Union. Soviet foreign and domestic policy at that time was geared to one main goal—to delay this attack and accelerate the country's defense preparations. Fearing that time was against him, Hitler invaded the USSR in June 1941.

The aggression against the Soviet Union thoroughly exposed the rapacious nature of fascist Germany and its political war aims.

"We grappled with fascism," said Marshal Georgi Zhukov, "when almost all of Europe was overwhelmed by it. We were the last hope for many people and nations. The world held its breath in 1941: would we survive or would the fascists take the upper hand here too? For us, this battle was the great test. It was a test of the viability of our social system, our communist morality, the strength of our economy, the unity of nations, in a word, everything that had been built after the year 1917."¹

The giant battle in the East assumed the character of a sharp struggle between two social systems—capitalism and socialism. Two different ideologies confronted each other in this battle: the reactionary ideology of fascism, and the progressive communist ideology. The people of the USSR were defending Soviet power and fighting for the social progress, freedom and independence of all peoples. Their courageous struggle roused the hopes of the people in the Nazi-occupied countries for victory over the enemy and inspired an upsurge in the Resistance movement that had begun in Europe. The USSR stepped into the front ranks of the anti-Hitler coalition and became its leading force. The center of World War II had shifted to the Soviet-German Front, to which Hitler moved 80 per cent of his land forces, 90 per cent of his air force, and thousands of tanks and guns.

However, it would be wrong to assume that after Germany attacked the Soviet Union the neutralist sentiments of the American people underwent a sudden change in favor of US entry into the war against the Axis powers. Many Americans still continued to think above all of peace for America. Many statements, resolutions, letters, telegrams and speeches bore witness to this.

A clash of opinions about the Soviet Union's entry into the war took place within the power structure. Different groups and trends within the bourgeois parties, in Congress and in business and government circles assessed this event and its possible consequences in different ways. Roosevelt and his associates took a wait-and-see attitude as they studied the balance of forces and the Soviet ability to resist the enemy. As part of this, the President sent his closest advisor, Harry

¹ An interview for *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Moscow, May 6, 1970.

Hopkins, on a mission to Moscow. At the same time, Roosevelt and his supporters saw in the USSR a potential war ally.

In reply to a telegram of congratulations from M. I. Kalinin, President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, on the Fourth of July (Independence Day), Roosevelt said that the American people were abhorred by the armed aggression, that they had strong bonds of friendship with the Russian people, and that therefore they were following with compassion and admiration the courageous struggle the Russian people were waging in self-defense.

But many other leaders, not concealing their hostile attitude to the Soviet Union, predicted its early destruction. Some, like Senator and future US President Truman, cynically expressed the hope nurtured by American reaction that Germany and the USSR would bleed each other white.¹

Truman spoke openly to the effect that it was in the interests of the United States for German and Soviet soldiers to kill as many of each other as possible. The bourgeois press gave wide coverage to such opinions. It is no wonder that many American workers, taking the false assertions of bourgeois propaganda on faith, felt that the Soviet Union would be unable to survive the struggle with Nazi Germany.

The top leaders of the AFL headed by Green took like positions. They distorted the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and implanted the notion in the minds of workers that the USSR was not disposed toward an alliance with Great Britain for a joint struggle against fascism. Progressive, democratically-minded Americans, however, ultimately succeeded in launching a movement for solidarity with the Soviet people.

It was precisely this circumstance that forced Green, despite his hostile anti-Soviet position, to assert in October 1941 in a report to the 61st AFL convention that America should aid the Soviet Union. He hastened to make it clear that this should be done "as a matter of expediency without any pretense that the two countries could become friends".²

The developing movement to aid England, the USSR and China was supported by CIO unions, some AFL locals, the

¹ See *The New York Times*, June 24, 1941.

² Joel Seidman, *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

Communist Party, the Labor Party of New York, and left and liberal figures in the arts and sciences.

Organized workers became the most dynamic and influential part of this movement. The Communist Party of the USA, whose prestige in the labor movement was rising noticeably, played an outstanding role. It pointed out that "this is a people's war", and that the workers were "the indestructible backbone" of the national war effort. "It is upon the broad shoulders of the working class that the main burden of the fight against Hitler falls."¹ It said that "Hitler, in declaring war against the Soviet Union, has signed his own death warrant".² The day that Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the National Committee of the US Communist Party called on the American people to launch a mass movement of solidarity with all the forces fighting fascism, and to render immediate and effective aid to the Soviet Union. Its statement declared: "Down with the criminal war of German fascism against the Soviet Union."³

On June 28, 1941, at an extraordinary plenary session of the National Committee, Foster in his report pointed out that Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union had changed the character of the world war, and thereby had made changes in the Party's attitude toward that war necessary. The Party renounced the slogan, "Keep America Out of War", and called on all working people to support the federal government's measures to strengthen the nation's defenses. It came out in favor of armed neutrality, rendering lend-lease aid to countries fighting against the Axis powers, and further increasing defense production.

A movement of solidarity with the countries fighting against fascism was mounting in the labor unions. Throughout the entire second half of 1941 the unions campaigned for increasing the rate of defense production and rendering military and other aid to Britain, the USSR and China.

Many labor organizations adopted resolutions and issued press releases expressing support of the peoples fighting

¹ *Daily Worker*, April 30, 1942.

² William Z. Foster, *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, New York, 1949, p. 134.

³ *Daily Worker*, June 23, 1941.

against fascism. A resolution of the CIO Unions Council of Chicago contained an appeal for immediate, full and unconditional assistance to all countries fighting against fascism. At a convention of the United Office and Professional Workers, such leaders as R. J. Thomas of the auto workers and Michael Quill of the Transport Workers Union called on working people to render aid to Russia and England, since for America there was nothing more important than the defeat of Hitler. The convention gave its full support to Roosevelt's foreign policy.

The third national convention of the National Maritime Union of America (CIO) held in Cleveland in July 1941 declared that the union recognized "the present struggle of Great Britain and the Soviet Union against the forces of fascism to be sincere and requiring the full support of all liberty loving people throughout the world. The present war (if genuinely prosecuted), can be the burying ground of fascism forever."¹ The International Hod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers Union of America at its September 1941 convention in St. Louis resolved that all possible aid should be lent and furnished to Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union, and that nothing should be done which would in any way tend to hamper or delay production.

When in the autumn of 1941 heavy fighting broke out along the approaches to Moscow, a conference of delegates representing 90,000 Ford workers discussed a plan for maximally increasing the production of munitions and other war materials for Britain and the Soviet Union. At mass meetings in New York, members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union hailed the Soviet Army and its resistance to the Nazi invasion. On October 27, a mass meeting was held in New York. Former Ambassador to the Soviet Union Joseph E. Davies told the 60,000 people assembled there that Russia needed tanks, airplanes, strategic raw materials, and help, friendship and understanding. He urged generous aid without delay. Expressing the mood prevailing at the meeting, Davies said that it was the duty and good fortune of the United States

¹ *Proceedings of the Third National Convention of the National Maritime Union of America (CIO)*, Cleveland, Ohio, July 7th to July 14th, 1941, p. 336.

to pay honor to the valiant, bold and courageous defense put up by the Soviet Government and the Russian people.

Progressive American workers held precisely these feelings. Even before the United States entered the war some labor unions began fund-raising for the USSR, and contributions began coming in as early as November. Among the first to set the example were the fur and leather workers, who sent two checks for \$50,000 each.¹ At the same time, there were increasing demands to repeal the remaining sections of the Neutrality Act. Almost all labor unions and workers' meetings urged the government to take decisive measures to render expeditious aid to Britain, the Soviet Union and China.

Roosevelt on November 7 assured the Soviet people that it was the desire of the government and people of the United States to do everything possible to assist the Soviet Union in that critical hour. The American government extended lend-lease to the Soviet Union. In a letter to lend-lease administrator Stettinius, the President suggested that he take immediate steps to provide war materials to the Soviet Union.

However, due to the resistance of reactionary circles, US and British aid to the Soviet Union lacked in speed and effectiveness. Suffice it to say that by the end of 1941 US military deliveries to the USSR amounted to only half a million dollars, and only seven convoys of freighters with war cargoes came from Britain to Archangelsk. To be sure, lend-lease aid increased in the following years, but it amounted to a very small share of the overall volume of war production put out in the USSR. Marshal Zhukov subsequently noted: "This aid should not be discounted. It unquestionably played its role. From England and America we received gunpowder, high-octane gasoline, several brands of steel, locomotives, airplanes, vehicles and food. But this was only a very small part of all that the war required."²

On November 17, 1941, Congress and the President approved a new amendment to the Neutrality Act of 1939. American merchant ships were now permitted to arm them-

¹ Philip S. Foner, *The Fur and Leather Workers Union. A Story of Dramatic Struggles and Achievements*, Newark, 1950, p. 611.

² *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 6, 1970.

selves, sail into zones of military operations, and call on ports of belligerents. The Neutrality Act thereby in fact ceased to operate. The administration and Congress increased defense appropriations, and developed the construction of more defense plants. Industry was gathering momentum, and unemployment dropping.

Already in early 1941 the labor unions had begun a movement for raising productivity and achieving the maximal use of production capacities in industry. After Germany attacked the Soviet Union, this drive assumed broad scope. A big role was played by the CIO, since two-thirds of its membership worked in the defense industry. A resolution adopted by the fourth convention of the CIO in November 1941 said that the essence of the national defense program consisted in producing the necessary volume of war materials—airplanes, tanks, ships, cannon—in order to give speedy aid to the countries fighting the fascist aggressors. To achieve this, it said, industry had to work at full capacity.

The call was timely. The steel industry alone was producing six million tons of steel less than it could have at full capacity.¹ The Steelworkers' Organizing Committee offered a plan to avert a 20 per cent cut in production, and sponsored a drive to collect scrap iron and steel throughout the country.² In the aircraft industry, the unions issued a call to bring production up to 500 airplanes a day. There were many such examples, all testifying to the concern of the unions about the production of munitions needed for lend-lease to Britain, the Soviet Union and China.

The fourth convention of the CIO in November 1941 considered the question of setting up industrial councils. A resolution said that the CIO proposed adoption of Murray's industry-council plan as a measure necessary at the present stage of the country's political development. Subsequent CIO conventions during the war also upheld the proposal for harmonious cooperation between capitalists and workers in the organization and management of production. The industrial monopolies always rejected this plan.

¹ *Labor Fact Book* 6, p. 71.

² *CIO News*, June 29, 1942; September 21, 1942.

In contrast to the CIO's industry-council plan, the AFL concentrated upon gaining representation for labor in already existing government defense agencies.¹

As 1941 drew to a close it took with it the last hopes for peace for Americans. Danger loomed from the West, from across the Pacific Ocean. In November, the long Japanese-American negotiations came to an impasse. Militarist Japan was preparing to attack American possessions in the Pacific. The attack on Pearl Harbor was destined to erase the last line between neutrality and war. The American people faced the fact of entering World War II.

December 1941 was an important milestone in World War II. On the eve of December 7, 1941, the Red Army mounted a counteroffensive in the snow-covered fields near Moscow, breached the enemy front, and beat Hitler's forces back far from Moscow. It was an historic victory for the Soviet Union.

On the same day that the Soviet Army dealt this heavy blow to the fascists, elsewhere a drama was enacted that put the United States into the ranks of the belligerents. It took place at Pearl Harbor. Japanese aircraft carriers under naval escort had approached the Hawaiian Islands unnoticed, and early on the morning of December 7, executed a devastating surprise attack on the US naval base there. The United States suffered heavy losses in lives, ships and planes. Simultaneously, the first raids were made against cities and bases on the Philippines, Guam, Wake and Midway islands.

On December 8, Congress declared war against Japan. On December 9 in an Address to the Nation, the President called on all Americans to come to the defense of their country. "We have learned," he said, "that our ocean-girt hemisphere is not immune from severe attack—that we cannot measure our safety in terms of miles on any map."² On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war against the United States.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor dealt the final blow to the isolationists; it meant the complete collapse of neutralist illusions and was the final factor forcing the United States to

¹ Philip Taft, *The A.F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger*, New York, 1959, pp. 210-11.

² *The New York Times*, December 10, 1941.

enter the war. Americans now had not only to produce arms, but to take them up themselves. General mobilization was declared.

Throughout the country long lines of citizens wishing to volunteer for the army formed at recruiting stations. In New York alone, over 115,000 men signed up on the first day of mobilization.

At the same time, the call-up under the Universal Military Conscription Law began. Letters came in from all parts of the country to the President, congressmen and the leaders of the AFL and CIO, in which workers voiced their support of the government, pledging to help it and take part in the struggle against fascism.

Shortly before Pearl Harbor, on November 24, 1941, the White House received a memorandum from the president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and vice-president of the CIO, Sidney Hillman. As the head of the labor division, Office of Production Management, he proposed that an agreement be made with industry regarding uninterrupted production during wartime. He said in the memorandum: "We are all agreed that 'strikes as usual' can no more be tolerated than 'business as usual' or 'profits as usual'.... Both the A.F. of L. and the CIO, at their recent conventions have pledged unstinted support to the defense program."¹ The memorandum further stressed that the unions were prepared to turn that commitment into a no-strike pledge if the United States entered the war, but on the condition that industry refrain from lockouts, breaks in production, and any actions that would adversely affect working conditions and wages. To reach such an agreement, it was proposed that a national conference of representatives of labor, industry and the government be called.

These proposals came not only from the unions; both industry and the government were no less interested in holding such a conference. On December 11, 1941, Roosevelt wrote to AFL and CIO leaders Green and Murray, and also to

¹ F.D.R. Library, 4684, Industrial Conference of Labor and Management, Sidney Hillman to the President, Nov. 24, 1941.

William Batt, Chairman of the Business Advisory Council of the Department of Commerce. In his letter to Batt, he said that he was calling a conference on wartime labor relations to be held between representatives of labor and industry in consultation with public representatives. The conference would commence on December 17 in Washington. The President felt it was essential to guarantee that mutual commitments would be met and that a mediation body be set up to avert and settle industrial labor disputes.

The unions responded immediately. On December 15, the AFL executive council issued a declaration urging all AFL members to make new efforts to build up the nation's military strength. It pledged that the workers in the defense industries would not resort to the strike until final victory over the enemy was won, and expressed the conviction that mutual grievances in all branches of the war industry would be removed with the help of mediation agencies. It also gave assurance that the AFL would cooperate with the government mediation service. Finally, the declaration pointed to the need to preserve the 40-hour workweek with time-and-a-half pay for overtime, as established by the 1938 wages and hours law.

A conference of AFL unions, held in Washington on December 16, 1941, discussed the tasks of the Federation in connection with the war effort. It issued a statement that reiterated many of the points mentioned in the executive council's declaration. Similar measures were taken by the CIO executive board. CIO union newspapers wrote about the anti-Japanese sentiments of the workers who, in face of the aggression, were ready to increase productivity or sign up for military service.

However, it would be an oversimplification to say that all American workers were enthusiastic about making the sacrifices involved on the no-strike decision. There were those who did not agree with this decision and demanded that work be stopped if employers rejected union demands. Authors Howe and Widick wrote about this in a book on the UAW. Even in this militant union, where democratic traditions were always strong, the politically conscious workers and their leaders had to work hard to gain acceptance of the decision not to strike during wartime. Resolutions to that effect twice failed

to pass at UAW conventions.¹ Similar situations occurred in AFL unions and the Railroad Brotherhoods.

On December 17, representatives of labor, industry and the government gathered in Washington. From the AFL came William Green, Matthew Woll, Daniel Tobin, George Meany, John Frey and J. Coyne; from the CIO, Philip Murray, Joseph Curran, Emil Rieve, R. J. Thomas, Julius Emspak and John L. Lewis. Industry was represented by big corporations. The conference reached agreement on banning strikes and lock-outs in industry for the duration of the war, and on the establishment of a National War Labor Board, whose functions would include settling all disputes and grievances. President Roosevelt and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins expressed satisfaction with the decisions of the conference. Concerned with the problem of national unity in this critical period, they undertook measures to create the Board immediately.

Less than a month later, on January 12, 1942, the National War Labor Board was established. In contrast to the National Defense Mediation Board which it replaced, the new board was given broad powers for settling disputes in the war industry during the national emergency. William H. Davis became chairman, and the Board consisted of 12 members, four representing industry, and four representing the public. The AFL representatives were George Meany and Matthew Woll; the CIO representatives were Thomas Kennedy and R. J. Thomas. How often the monopolies and employers violated contract provisions can be judged by the fact that in the first half of 1942 alone, 272 cases involving the interests of almost two million wage earners were brought before the Board.² On January 22, the President sent Green and Murray a letter which said: "In order that Labor's part in the national effort may be most effective, I am asking the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations to form a Combined Labor War Board, to consult with me periodically on all matters concerning Labor's participation in the war. It is my thought that this Board would meet with me

¹ See Irving Howe and B. J. Widick, *The UAW and Walter Reuther*, pp. 111-14.

² *AFL, Proceedings*, 1942, p. 188.

and therefore it should be sufficiently small to make this a real 'round table' talk."¹ The AFL and CIO leadership supported Roosevelt, and three days later the Combined Labor War Board was formed. It was composed of Green, Meany and Tobin from the AFL, and Murray, Thomas and Emspak from the CIO. A meeting of the Board, under the chairmanship of Roosevelt, took place in the White House in February 1942.

Such were the first practical steps taken by the labor unions after US entry into the war. The American working class, and especially organized labor, now had to assume a considerable part of the responsibility for creating the conditions necessary for the country to make a worthy contribution to the common cause of defeating fascism.

Entry into the war was a powerful stimulus for stepping up production and putting the economy on a war footing. The industrial boom which had begun in the years of neutrality now entered a more active stage. It reached its peak in 1943; and for some branches in 1944. The industrial production index, according to data published by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System gives an idea of the dynamics of production during World War II (1957-1959=100)²:

1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
38.3	43.9	56.4	69.3	82.9	81.7	70.5

The growth of war production was particularly intensive, with the average monthly index rising from 8 in 1940 to 102 in 1944, or an increase of 12.7 times.³ In late 1942, production for war was about 55 per cent of total output, as against 18 per cent in 1941.⁴ The war boom was distinguished also by a marked increase in government investment in the economy and in the government's share in industry. Some representatives of big finance capital expressed serious concern about

¹ *American Federation of Labor*, Weekly News Service, Washington, January 27, 1942, p. 1.

² Л. Я. Берри и др. *Промышленность США в 1929-1963 гг.*, pp. 20-21.

³ *Economic Notes*, February 1945, p. 2.

⁴ *Labor Fact Book* 6, p. 12.

this, seeing the growth of government ownership, especially in the war industries, as a threat to private enterprise.

The government's role in the capitalist economy during the war had indeed grown, as manifested in increased subsidies for industry. During the war, about \$26 billion worth of new facilities were built, of which about \$17 billion worth were financed directly with federal funds.¹ A total of about 2,800 enterprises were built with federal funds, including 534 aircraft, 150 steel, 116 machine tool building, 84 aluminum, 65 shipbuilding and 60 synthetic rubber plants, plus a number of oil refineries, electrical plants and other enterprises.² Congress approved increasingly large budget appropriations for war expenditures. Of the \$329 billion in budget allocations between 1940 and 1945 inclusive, war expenditures amounted to \$292 billion.³ While in the prewar year \$1.2 billion were spent for these purposes, in 1945 the figure reached \$90.5 billion.⁴ War expenditures in 1942 constituted 32 per cent of total production, as compared with 10 per cent in 1941 and 2 per cent in 1939.⁵

The government distributed war orders among the big corporations. Between June 1940 and September 1944, it awarded \$175 billion in contracts to some 18,539 corporations.⁶ Of these, more than 30 of the most powerful monopolies were under the control of the Morgan, Mellon, Rockefeller and Du Pont Wall Street banks. On the whole, eight major banking groups controlled about one hundred of the strongest and most influential non-finance corporations. Over two-thirds, or \$118 billion, of the above-mentioned \$175 billion in government contracts went to this group of companies. About 30 per cent of all the war contracts were awarded to big corporations like General Motors, Ford Motor Company and General Electric. A total of \$70 billion in contracts went to 16 corporations, most of which operated in

¹ Hyman Lumer, *War Economy and Crisis*, New York, 1954, p. 84.

² William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, p. 410.

³ *Очерки новой и новейшей истории США*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1960, p. 266.

⁴ *The Economic Almanac*, New York, 1956, p. 455.

⁵ *Proceedings of the Fifth Biennial Convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, CIO*, San Francisco, June 4-10, 1943, p. 27.

⁶ Hyman Lumer, *Op. cit.*, pp. 209-10.

the aircraft, ship-building, explosives, and light metals industries. Not surprisingly, production in these industries increased 20 to 35 times during the war.¹

The administration continued its line of reorganizing government agencies to better meet wartime needs. Thus, in January 1942, the Office of Production Management was replaced with the War Production Board (WPB). Roosevelt appointed Donald Nelson, vice-president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., to head it. The WPB Production Division was headed by William H. Harrison, vice-president of American Telephone and Telegraph; Industrial Operations by James S. Knowlson, president and chairman of the board of Stewart-Warner Corp., and the Materials Division by William L. Batt, president of SKF Industries. Other key posts in WPB system went to William Knudsen, Edward Stettinius and Philip Reed, all top executives of big industrial corporations.² On October 2, 1942, President Roosevelt signed an anti-inflation bill, and established the Office of Economic Stabilization, headed by Justice James F. Byrnes, to administer the new law.³ Also created were a Price Control Board, a War Shipping Administration, and other agencies.

Seeking to stimulate industrial development, the President gave much attention to activating the role of the labor unions. He sent messages to conventions of the AFL, CIO, Railroad Brotherhoods and international unions, and wrote personal letters to Green, Murray, Lewis, Whitney and other leaders. In a letter to William Green and the AFL executive council dated December 13, 1941, he expressed his confidence in the wholehearted cooperation of organized labor in those serious days.⁴

Roosevelt established close contact with many labor leaders, consulted with them and appointed them to important posts in government agencies. Not only Hillman, Murray, Green,

¹ James S. Allen, *World Monopoly and Peace*, New York, 1946, p. 97.

² Hyman Lumer, *Op. cit.*, p. 221.

³ See Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*, p. 223.

⁴ See WSHS Library, AFL Papers, William Green Correspondence, Box 9, Special Executive Council Meeting, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Green, Dec. 13, 1941.

Harrison and Carey, but many other leaders were actively involved in the work of committees and boards.

An executive order of April 18, 1942 established the War Manpower Commission, which assumed certain functions of a number of government agencies that dealt with manpower problems. It was charged not only with keeping track of labor resources, but also with the retraining and distribution of skilled personnel for the war industry. The creation of this federal agency was dictated by the necessity of bringing the element of organization into the theretofore spontaneous process of manpower mobility, and the need to help supply the leading war industries with skilled workers. All these measures attested to the enhanced role and influence of the federal government in the capitalist economy and class relations.

The war opened up prospects of high profits for American industrialists. The scramble for profits took place against a background of fierce competitive struggle. As mentioned earlier, during the years of neutrality the number of companies in the United States fell from 473,000 to 468,000. During the war, more and more companies, unable to withstand the blows of big capital, either failed or were absorbed by the monopolies, so that by 1944 the total number of operating American companies went down to 412,500.¹ Also, the number of banks was reduced from 14,975 to 14,660 from 1941 through 1945, but total bank assets grew from \$87.3 billion to \$162.2 billion.²

This process led to a further increase in the concentration of industrial production and, similarly, of huge masses of workers in giant enterprises. According to a report of the Senate Small Business Committee, before the war there were 49 enterprises in the USA that employed over 10,000 workers each. By the end of the war, there were 344.

During the war the rate and scope of industrial raw material and fuel production grew. There was tremendous growth in the extraction of oil, gas, ores, bauxites, non-ferrous metals, and the production of electricity, chemicals and explosives.

¹ *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957*, p. 572 (figures rounded—Auth.).

² *Ibid.*, p. 623.

Ship building and machine building developed at a high rate. Workers in the war industry reached record indicators, creating a vast quantity of airplanes, tanks, artillery, ammunition and other war materials.

It was a period of industrial upsurge, and, as is usually the case in upswing phases, supply and demand on the labor market shifted in favor of the working class. A huge army of workers was needed to fulfil the war production program. Thus, unemployment was reduced to a minimum. The following figures show the employment picture between 1940 and 1945 (in thousands).¹

Table 1

	Total	Armed forces	Civilian work force	Civilian work force	
				Empl.	Unempl.
1940	54,760	530	54,230	45,340	8,890
1941	55,730	1,640	54,090	49,090	5,000
1942	58,500	4,000	54,500	52,110	2,390
1943	62,830	8,950	53,880	52,410	1,470
1944	63,990	11,370	52,620	51,780	840
1945	64,360	11,610	52,750	51,600	1,150

As can be seen, employment in the economy reached its peak in 1943. Serious difficulties arose in providing industry with labor power, especially in meeting the constantly growing demand for skilled workers. This demand was greatest in the war industry. According to War Production Board data, nearly 41 million persons were in nonagricultural employment at the beginning of 1942. Of these, about 20 million were employed in manufacturing, mining, construction, public utilities and transportation.² Five million were employed in the war industries at that time. By the end of the year the number increased to 15 million, and by mid-1943, to nearly 18 million.³

¹ *Труд и капитал в США, Сборник фактов*, Moscow, 1949, p. 65.

² F.D.R. Library, 4245-E, Office of Production Management Labor Division, January 13, 1942.

³ *Ibid.*; see also AFL, *Proceedings*, 1942, p. 99.

The overall employment picture for nonagricultural employees changed as follows (in thousands)¹:

Table 2

	1941	1942	1943	1944
Total	36,220	39,779	42,106	41,534
Manufacturing	12,974	15,051	17,381	17,111
Mining	947	983	917	883
Contract construction	1,790	2,170	1,567	1,094
Transportation and public utilities	3,248	3,433	3,619	3,798
Wholesale and retail trade	7,416	7,333	7,189	7,260
Finance, insurance and real estate	1,480	1,469	1,435	1,409
Service and miscellaneous	3,705	3,857	3,919	3,934
Government	4,660	5,483	6,080	6,043

It should be borne in mind that Table 2 gives the total employment figures for the entire able-bodied population except for those working in agriculture. Therefore these figures do not accurately reflect the actual number of working people, since they also include the nonproductive category of the population, who appropriate the greater part of the national income.

In most branches of the economy, 1943 and 1944 were peak employment years. Employment began to drop in late 1943 in some industries and early 1944 in others. Statistics for the war years show almost full employment of the civilian population. A factor of no little importance was that 11.3 million Americans were in the armed forces in 1944. A large percentage of these were workers who were drafted or volunteered. A great many of them would not have been able to find work in a peacetime economy. Thus, the war created the illusion of full employment. Consequently, as some American economists and historians assert, however high the number of employed may have been during the war, it cannot be considered full employment.²

¹ *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957*, p. 73; *Monthly Labor Review*, January 1948, p. 82; December 1955, pp. 1505, 1508.

² See for example: Eli Ginzberg and Hyman Berman, *The American Worker*

The entry of the United States into the war was instrumental in changing not only labor's economic position but also the prevailing political sentiments. This manifested itself mainly in the attitude to the country's active participation in the war and its discharging its duty as an ally. The events on the fronts of the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War had a particularly great impact on the thinking and feelings of progressive American workers.

in *the Twentieth Century*, London, 1963; Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, *A Short History of the United States*, New York, 1956; B. J. Widick, *Labor Today. The Triumphs and Failures of Unionism in the United States*, Boston, 1964; Sidney C. Sufrin and Robert C. Sedgwick, *Labor Economics and Problems at Mid-Century*, New York, 1956.

CHAPTER IV

THE MOVEMENT FOR A SECOND FRONT
IN 1942-1943

The Soviet Union took the blows of Nazi Germany's main forces. But to achieve an early defeat of fascism and to save human lives it was absolutely necessary that a second front be opened in Europe. On January 1, 1942, twenty-six states, which had earlier subscribed to the Atlantic Charter of August 14, 1941, signed a joint Declaration in the White House. It said:

"(1) Each government pledges itself to employ its full resources, military or economic, against those members of the Tripartite Pact and its adherents with which such government is at war.

"(2) Each government pledges itself to cooperate with the government signatory hereto and not to make a separate armistice or peace with the enemies."¹ The anti-fascist coalition was now fully formed and the question of a second front was put on the agenda as a practical task.

However, the British and American commands continued to limit their military operations to naval and air forces. Though they promised to open a second front, the United States and Great Britain took no actual steps to carry out the promise. With references to unpreparedness, they put off a second front from 1942 to 1943, then from 1943 to the spring of 1944, and from the spring to June.² In the meantime, they stressed

¹ *The New York Times*, January 3, 1942.

² See *Correspondence between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Presidents of the USA and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1957, pp. 31, 141.

the importance and urgency of the naval operations in the Atlantic and Pacific. Corliss Lamont, then Chairman of the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, wrote at that time that there were groups within the United States who were "trying to switch the main emphasis of the war to the Far East", opposing all plans for a trans-Channel Second Front, and "seizing every pretext to stir up hatred, suspicion and fear of the Soviet Union". He added: "By their disruptive tactics they may succeed and are already succeeding in prolonging the war."¹

Progressive public opinion throughout the world demanded that the governments of Britain and the United States discharge their duty as allies. But Western political and military circles paid little heed to the interests of the Soviet Union. Becoming increasingly insistent, however, was the voice of progressive sections of the American public which had launched a movement for the opening of a second front. One union paper, for example, wrote: "We can lose the war by concentrating on the Far East." It stressed the secondary importance of that front, pointing out that the main enemy was Germany.²

The sweep of the movement for effective aid to the Soviet Union cannot be explained simply by the growing awareness and solidarity of American workers, however important this was. Another no less important factor was the realization of the danger of being left face to face with the powerful enemy if the USSR were defeated. These apprehensions were clearly formulated, for example, by Senator Claude Pepper (Dem., Florida), who said that if the Russian front were breached, if the Russian army wavered, if the supply of war materials to Russia were cut off, then the torrent of Hitlerism would rush to all corners of the world and turn into a mighty wave that nothing could withstand. He spoke about this in the Senate on June 17, 1942.

Outstanding representatives of American culture and many government figures viewed the courageous struggle of the Soviet people with deep-felt admiration. Among them were the

¹ Corliss Lamont, *America and Russia*, New York, 1943, p. 5.

² *Advance*, February 1, 1942.

world-famous authors Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair and Ernest Hemingway, Senator Claude Pepper, the eminent public figure Colonel Raymond Robins and many other progressive Americans. They all hailed the heroic fight of the Soviet people and called upon Americans to give them immediate and effective support in the struggle with fascism.

In letters and telegrams to the USSR Society for Foreign Cultural Ties, many prominent American writers and artists expressed their support of the efforts of the Soviet people in the struggle with fascism.

Progressive American workers were among the initiators and active participants in a broad campaign under the slogans: "America Must Help Open the Western Front!", "Shoot at Hitler with Both Barrels!" and "Demand the Repeal of the Whole Neutrality Act!"¹ These demands were already being voiced in late 1941, on the eve of the United States' entry into the war. Among the organizations sponsoring the campaign, a big role was played by the Anti-Hitler Labor Committee, one of whose leaders was the progressive Congressman Vito Marcantonio. The Committee planned and conducted a number of mass meetings of working people and unionists. One such meeting took place on October 25, 1941 in New York, at which American workers spoke with concern about the developments in the war. Lauding the successes of the Soviet and British trade unions in achieving unity of action in the struggle against fascism, the participants in the meeting urged the CIO and AFL to join with the British and Russian trade unions in organizing "a joint trade union conference for the purpose of establishing a mighty world anti-Hitler fortress of the British-Russian-American trade unions".²

Of particular importance was an extraordinary convention of CIO trade unions that was held March 24, 1942 in Washington with over 500 delegates in attendance. It passed a resolution fully supporting the President's statement on the

¹ New York Public Library (later referred to here as NYP Library), Manuscripts Division, Vito Marcantonio's Papers, IX "Labor and Labor Unions", Box No. 1, Folder "Labor Miscellaneous", To the Citizens of New York.

² *Ibid.*

need for the United States to assume the offensive against the Axis powers. Another resolution provided for the creation of joint committees by AFL and CIO locals to support the nation's war effort. By the beginning of 1943 there were 1,900 such committees representing approximately 3,750,000 workers, or nearly one-fourth of the number of workers engaged in war production.¹ Most of these committees were under the leadership of CIO unions.

For the CIO unions the entire first half of 1942 was marked by the growing movement to support the government's war measures. An active part in this was taken by Americans of Slavonic origin of whom there were then about 15 million in the country. A number of their organizations came to an agreement to convene an American Slav Congress.

Preparations for the congress began in the spring of that year, and it opened on April 26 in Detroit. CIO and AFL representatives took an active part. In attendance were over 2,500 delegates from Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Slovak, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bulgarian, Macedonian and other Slav-American organizations. The President of the United States, the leaders of the CIO and AFL, and head of the War Production Board Nelson sent messages of greetings to the congress. The congress addressed a greeting to all the Slavs of Europe, and adopted a special resolution calling for a second front in Europe.

A permanent National Committee of the American Slav Congress was established, headed by vice-president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (CIO) Leo Krzycki. In the years that followed, American workers of Slavonic origin took an active part in the organization.

The campaign begun by the CIO convention was also joined by the AFL. On May 1, more than 50 CIO and AFL unions in New York issued a call to their members to strain every effort to ensure victory over the enemy on the Western Front in 1942. Many unions decided to work instead of demonstrating on May 1. In a number of states, drives developed spontaneously to collect funds for aid to the Soviet people and committees were set up for the purpose. The UAW

¹ *Labor Fact Book* 6, p. 88.

(CIO) conducted a fund-raising campaign. During the years of the struggle for opening the second front, the small Fur and Leather Workers Union collected over \$2 million for the aid-to-the-USSR fund.¹

Some American unions sent May Day greetings to the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions expressing their solidarity. The National Maritime Union of America, for example, wrote on April 30, 1942: "We pledge full support for the immediate opening of an all-out Western Front in Europe." In its letter of October 16, 1941, the CIO Council of Cook County (Illinois) wrote to the AUCCTU, "We trade unionists of America feel the gravity of the situation and are tugging at the leash, so to speak, to be able to help in your hour of need." And Lewis Merrill, President of the United Office and Professional Workers of America, cabled, "We are with you for victory in 1942." Many AFL locals also sent letters, telegrams and resolutions addressed to the AUCCTU pledging to work unremittingly for the opening of a Western Front against Hitler Germany.²

A mass meeting was held in Madison Square Garden in New York on June 22, the first anniversary of the Nazi attack on the USSR. Among those who addressed the many thousands gathered there were Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's closest advisor; Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet Ambassador in Washington; Mayor LaGuardia of New York City; and Supreme Court Justice Reed. Hopkins told about his trip to Moscow and expressed confidence that the Russian armies would drive off the invaders.³

Just over a month later, on July 25, the CIO unions of New York called another meeting in Madison Square Garden. Speaking before tens of thousands of industrial and office workers were Senators Claude Pepper and James Mead (New York), Mayor LaGuardia of New York City, Joseph Curran and Mike Quill, presidents of the Maritime Workers and the Transport Workers.

¹ Philip S. Foner, *The Fur and Leather Workers Union*, p. 613.

² *May Day Greetings 1942*. National Maritime Union of America, the October Revolution Central State Archives, Moscow.

³ *Daily Worker*, June 23, 1942.

A 75-member delegation was elected at the meeting and shortly thereafter went to Washington to visit the White House. On behalf of nearly a million CIO union members of the state of New York, the delegates presented the President with a message urging the government to open a second front immediately. Other meetings and demonstrations were held in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Haven, Buffalo, New Orleans, Detroit, Newark and Pittsburgh.

The autumn of 1942, when the great battle of Stalingrad was raging, saw an increase in the flow of resolutions, telegrams, letters and postcards coming to the White House, Congress, and the AFL and CIO Washington headquarters, in which unions and individual workers called for a speedy opening of a second front.

The turning point in the battle against fascism was reached at the end of 1942 on the huge Soviet-German front. The principal event was the rout of the Germans at Stalingrad and in the Caucasus. The balance of forces on the front was changed, with the initiative now in the hands of the Soviet command. And although the movement in the United States for opening the second front had somewhat declined, it did not die out in 1943. Many unions continued to campaign for a Western Front and all-out assistance to the Soviet Union.

In April 1943, the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship was founded. Its creation was the outcome of activity on the part of the many city and state Committees of American-Soviet Friendship which had arisen in 1941 and 1942. The Chairman of the National Council, Corliss Lamont, said: "Never has the friendship between our peoples had such vital meaning as it has today when, thanks to the incomparable skill and courage of the Russian army and people, we are within sight of victory."¹

The Russian War Relief committees that had emerged in 1941 and 1942 continued their fund-raising drives. In the first quarter of 1943, the National Committee of Aiding the Soviet Union collected \$4 million, which was used for medical and other supplies sent to the USSR. Workers took an active part in the fund raising.

¹ Corliss Lamont, *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

The progressive labor press continued to give wide coverage to the movement of solidarity. Americans of Russian and Ukrainian origin, among whom were many workers and trade unionists published in Russian and Ukrainian the newspapers *Русский голос* (*Russian Voice*) and *Щоденні вісті* (*Daily News*) in New York. These papers kept their readers informed about the situation at the fronts, especially the Eastern Front, and about the movement within the United States for aid to the Soviet Union.

The conventions of some trade unions criticized the government for its delay in resolving the problem of opening a second front. This criticism was made in speeches at conventions of the longshoremen and warehousemen, the maritime workers, the transport workers, the electrical workers and others. From California, Colorado, Utah, New Jersey, Maryland, Ohio and many other states where CIO union conventions were held, came resolutions to the White House all asking the same question: When? When would the second front finally be opened in Western Europe?

However, there were also voices raised against such demands. In particular, this happened at the sixth national convention of the CIO held in the autumn of 1943 in Philadelphia.

The convention passed a resolution in which the members of CIO unions pledged their support of the war effort.¹ However, the convention rejected a proposal backed by many delegates to have the resolution include a point about the need to open the second front without delay. Explaining the refusal to accept this demand, the chairman of the drafting committee, Van Bittner, said that unfortunately the committee was composed of civilians and was therefore in no position to set the timing for an Allied landing in Europe. The resolution thus said nothing about the Allied commitment to open a second front. In a number of CIO and AFL unions, the second front question was essentially taken off the agenda, and in many instances was not even raised. This was also the case at conventions of the Railroad Brotherhoods.

As for the leaders of the AFL, they showed their true face at the 63rd AFL convention in October 1943. Upon the urging of

¹ *Resolutions of the Sixth CIO Convention*, Philadelphia, 1943, p. 23.

the drafting committee, the convention rejected a resolution submitted by the Vermont State Federation of Labor, which called upon the executive council to consider the possibilities of cooperation with Soviet trade unions within the framework of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee.¹

Some delegates vainly insisted that the AFL pursue a policy of unity of action with the CIO on a national scale.

Voting down a proposal emphasizing the need for constructive negotiations with the CIO, the convention endorsed the political line taken by the executive council on this question. The latest consequence of that line was that during its session of March 31-April 1, 1943, the federation council had unilaterally decided to halt the work of the AFL-CIO Combined Labor War Board which had been created shortly after the United States entered the war to coordinate the war effort of organized workers.² The convention arbitrarily accused the CIO of attempting to destroy the AFL by making systematic raids of its trade unions. At the same time, however, the convention demagogically expressed its wish that the Federation keep a unity committee for the purpose of exploring every possibility of establishing unity with the CIO.³

A chronic problem with trade unions had long been that of raiding activities. It was the consequence of the constant hostility not only between AFL and CIO leaders, but also between various independent labor organizations and the Railroad Brotherhoods. Such raids were made particularly against progressive CIO unions, accused of being "infiltrated" by Communists.

In an article, "Democracy in Labor Unions: A Report and Statement of Policy", Prof. Clyde Summers wrote: "Employers are not the only enemy, for rival unions may constantly threaten the union's very existence by raiding its membership or seeking to supplant it as bargaining representative."⁴ The instigators of such raids tried to persuade workers to go over to

¹ See *The American Federationist*, November 1943, p. 18.

² *AFL, Proceedings*, 1943, pp. 508, 509.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ George P. Shultz, John R. Coleman, *Labor Problems: Cases and Readings*, New York, 1953, p. 42.

the union they controlled. Often such actions were attended by the sacking of the union's headquarters and beatings of its activists by hirelings of the rival union.

Company managers or agents, clergymen, local politicians, sheriffs and police became involved in the bitter clashes. Some corrupt union leaders resorted to the services of gangsters with the aim of taking over one or another local. In such cases gangs would terrorize the members of the victimized union and harass and beat up their leaders. These raids were one of the disgraceful sides of the labor movement of the United States, testifying to the strong influence of criminal elements on the fate of many unions.

Thus, instead of supporting the movement for opening the second front, the top leaders of the AFL, and with them most of the delegates to the 1943 convention, reaffirmed their hostile attitude to the idea of unity on an international or national scale. Despite the imperative necessity for unity and solidarity among all workingmen in the fight to annihilate fascism, the atmosphere at the convention was one of animosity toward the CIO. Green and his closest associates steered the convention and the organized workers along the former lines of hostility toward the Soviet trade unions.

Nonetheless, despite the stance of hostile forces, the campaign for opening the second front in 1942 or 1943 demonstrated that the attitude of most Americans to the Soviet Union was friendly, and fully confirmed the possibility of a further expansion of Soviet-American ties. Basically, the movement for opening the second front in 1942-1943 was a continuation of the peace movement, but now under wartime conditions. It was humanistic, since its goal was to give support to the Soviet people in the struggle against fascism, and for total destruction of the common enemy. While it was not broad enough to exert decisive influence on US political and military strategy it did help to expose the real reasons for the delays in opening the second front, showing that they were prompted more by political than military considerations.

Many American writers tend to ignore this movement. Historian Joel Seidman, for example, states that only a minority of workers under the influence of the Communists came out in support of the Soviet Union. "The rest of the labor

movement, while not concealing its dislike of communism and staunchly opposing our entry into the war, advocated the sending of aid to the Soviet Union, as a gesture to a country that had been the victim of aggression and as a military measure to help insure the defeat of Hitlerism."¹ Seidman says nothing about the broad movement of organized labor that was permeated with the spirit of solidarity with all the peoples fighting against fascism, including the Soviet people. Such was the nature of this movement, regardless of what many of its participants may have felt about the difference in the economic and political systems of the USA and the USSR.

In the war years the US Communist Party declared its support of Roosevelt's policies and refrained from coming out independently during elections. This was a line aimed at strengthening national unity. In working toward this end, the Communist Party exposed the reactionary elements in Congress and the bourgeois parties, the Hearst press and the activity of many pro-fascist groupings. It came out against the candidates of the Republican Party in the elections of 1940 and 1944, particularly against its presidential candidate, Thomas Dewey.

The Communist Party regarded the American workers as the most progressive and cohesive anti-fascist segment of the population. Their most organized section was in the trade unions, which had a total membership at that time of eleven million. That is why the Communist Party attached primary importance to work in the unions.

An important effort of the party during these years was its work to promote unity of action by the AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods. Owing to its vigorous activity the Joint AFL-CIO Board was created in early 1942. Although the board developed its activity in plants and unions very slowly, which drew criticism in the Communist press, it nonetheless played an important role in coordinating union actions aimed at speeding up output and increasing labor productivity.

The Communist Party advocated uninterrupted war production and supported the position of unions that pledged not

¹ Joel Seidman, *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

to strike for the duration. All the energies of the working class for the defeat of the common enemy of mankind—such was the slogan of the American Communists.

The Communists supplemented their educational activity by direct participation in the work of union locals. They enjoyed the confidence and respect of the membership among unions in the fur and leather, food and tobacco, electrical and radio, iron mining, ore mining and smelting industries. The Communists had considerable influence in the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union of the Pacific Coast. All these unions were affiliated with the CIO. Many leaders and rank-and-file members in the maritime workers', fishermen's, and marine cooks' and stewards' unions heeded the voice of the Communists. They were also very active in the farm equipment workers' union. Local party organizations enjoyed the support of labor unions in Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Flint, Dearborn and Pittsburgh.

The main center of the Communist Party's activity was, as before, New York, where its National Committee was located and where it held its conferences and conventions. Also located in New York were headquarters of some large unions and the executive committee of the American Labor Party, with whom the Communist Party cooperated. Among the New York unions in whose work Communists took part were the electrical workers', fur and leather workers', communication workers', maritime workers', hotel and restaurant workers', wholesale and retail trade employees', and department store clerks' unions.

The Communist Party was an influential working-class organization, closely connected with the CIO. There were many CIO unions in the city and state of New York, with a total of almost a million members. Communist Party organizations also carried out important work in Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania and especially on the West Coast in California, Oregon and Washington. The party had among its members many experienced journalists and union officials who headed a number of big CIO unions. It endorsed the general line of the CIO executive board and maintained and strengthened contacts with its president Philip Murray. On his part, Murray not only did not reject this cooperation, but did a great deal to make it fruitful. Of course, Murray and the Communists held

fundamentally different views on working-class problems, but this did not interfere with their cooperation. Both were aware of the common goals in the struggle with fascism. This was the platform on which their temporary unity of action was based.

The Communist Party also sought this kind of cooperation with the American Federation of Labor. However, the openly hostile attitude of the AFL leaders prevented establishing direct contacts. Communists working in some local AFL organizations experienced great difficulties.

Important educational work was done by Communist-led labor schools in New York and San Francisco, which offered lecture courses in the natural sciences, philosophy, political science and history. The Communist Party took an active part in preparing and conducting mass meetings in New York, Chicago and San Francisco, and played a prominent role in launching the movement for a second front in Europe in 1942-1943.

On May 15, 1943, the Presidium of the Communist International introduced a resolution for endorsement by its sections proposing that the International be dissolved. The statement spoke of the historic role the Comintern had played in uniting the working people in the struggle against fascism and war. At the same time, it pointed to the insurmountable difficulties involved in trying to solve the tasks of the labor movement of each individual country through an international center. It also underlined the differences among the various countries in level and rate of social and political development, and degree of worker awareness and organization. The Presidium pointed to the need for Communist parties to display greater flexibility and independence in solving the national and international tasks standing before them. The resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International said: "The entire course of events over the past quarter-century and the experience gathered by the Communist International have convincingly shown that the organizational form for uniting the workers chosen by the First Congress of the Communist International ... has more and more become outgrown by the movement's development and by the increasing complexity of its problems in separate countries, and has even become a hindrance to the further



2. Gus Hall, General Secretary of the National Committee of the Communist Party USA

strengthening of the national working-class parties.”¹ The world war sharpened the differences in the situations existing in the various countries. Back in 1935, taking into account the changes both in the international situation and the labor movement, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International had instructed the Executive Committee “to proceed, in deciding any question, from the concrete situation and specific conditions obtaining in each particular country.”²

With the consent of the sections, the Presidium of the Executive Committee on June 8, 1943 announced the dissolution of the Comintern.³

The Comintern had played an important role in uniting the progressive forces of the international proletariat around the Communist parties. Furthermore, it rendered invaluable service in fighting fascism.

The dissolution of the Comintern in many ways increased the responsibility of Communist parties in the work of uniting the progressive forces in each particular country. This applied to the Communist Party of the USA no less than to others. We might recall that as early as November 1940 it had withdrawn from the Comintern because of the threat of its being outlawed under the Voorhis Act. The CP USA noted in an official communication that the decision to dissolve the International did not affect the organizational status of the party, because since 1940 it had not maintained ties with any other organizations outside the

¹ *Коммунистический Интернационал*, 1943, No. 5-6, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

country.¹ The party leadership declared that the party would follow the principles of proletarian internationalism and fight for the unity of the international labor movement and for national unity in the interest of achieving victory over fascism.

However, it so happened that by the end of the war, the unity of the party itself was shaken, and the party faced a difficult period of ideological and organizational disarray. The crisis did not break out suddenly; it festered slowly, finally developing into the revisionism of Earl Browder. Looking back, the American Communists now make a comprehensive assessment of the zigzags that occurred in the party's history. This applies in particular to its withdrawal from the Comintern. It was not only anti-Communist legislation that precipitated the withdrawal; it was provoked by ingrained opportunism and the Browderist revisionism that had already taken root. The withdrawal from the international organization only gave added fuel to these tendencies.

Entry into the war gave rise to a movement for national unity. All classes and groups of Americans were called upon to unite in the war against fascism, and Roosevelt's policies were destined to epitomize this. As can be readily imagined, in a country so full of social contrasts this unity was viewed by different sections of the populace not only through the prism of national interests, but through that of class interests as well.

The struggle between the monopolies and labor did not stop, for the contradictions between them still remained. Although the unions pledged to refrain from striking for the duration of the war, the strike movement was still in sharp evidence, as confirmed by the following strike statistics covering the period from 1940 through 1945:²

	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total
Work stoppages	2,508	4,288	2,968	3,752	4,956	4,750	23,222
Workers involved (in thousands)	577	2,360	840	1,980	2,120	3,470	11,347
Man-days idle (in millions)	6.7	23.0	4.1	13.5	8.7	38.0	94.0

¹ *Daily Worker*, May 24, 1943.

² *The Economic Almanac*, New York, 1960, p. 300; *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957*, p. 99 (figures for man-days idle rounded—Auth.).

The above figures show that labor intensified its struggle against the monopolies in 1944 and 1945, as compared with the two-year period of neutrality. Moreover, as can be seen from the following table, with the exception of the figure for man-days idle, the strike figures were higher during the war years than during the entire preceding decade:¹

	1930-1939	1940-1945
Work stoppages	20,150	23,222
Workers involved (in thousands)	9,114	11,347
Man-days idle (in millions)	141.8	94.0

This seemingly paradoxical situation had a number of causes. First of all, the size of the working class had grown considerably in comparison with the prewar decade. Whereas in 1939 there were 30.3 million in nonagricultural employment, there were 42.1 million in 1943. Moreover, total employment in manufacturing had grown from 10 million to 17.3 million,² and the number of production workers in the manufacturing industry had gone up from 8.2 million to 15 million.³ We might compare these data with the corresponding figures for 1935, when the total number of workers employed in manufacturing was only 8.9 million, including 7.3 million production workers.⁴ The impressive numerical growth of the working class during the war years could not but be reflected in an increase in the number of work stoppages and workers involved.

The main reason for the growth of the strike movement was still the insecurity of a considerable part of the working class, especially in areas not involved in defense work, or where unskilled manpower was used on a large scale.

Further, as we have already seen, there was a marked increase of activity in the entire economy during the years

¹ See Volume I of the present work, pp. 361-62.

² *The Economic Almanac*, 1960, p. 336; *Monthly Labor Review*, March 1956, p. 280 (figures for man-days idle rounded—Auth.).

³ *The Economic Almanac*, 1960, p. 247.

⁴ See Volume I of the present work, p. 312.

America took part in the war, and this led to a sharp deficit of labor power in industry. In periods of economy upswing, the workers were as a general rule no less active in fighting for their rights than in times of crisis or depression. In fact, they tended to resort to the strike even more readily, for they had less fear of being left without a job. Indeed, during the war the threat of mass unemployment had temporarily disappeared, and this created favorable conditions for successful strikes. However, labor's natural desire to exploit the favorable economic situation by intensifying the strike struggle clashed with the political sentiments and goals conditioned by the war. A real contradiction arose, which most unions tried to overcome by doing everything possible to avoid conflicts with employers and come to terms with them at the negotiating table. They made every effort to stick to their pledge not to resort to the strike for the duration. However, this was not always possible.

The monopolies frequently violated collective bargaining agreements and refused to renew them on new terms. Progressive American historian Philip Foner wrote: "Unfortunately, there were employers ... who, placing profits above everything else, sought to take advantage of the workers' patriotism. Aware that the union would not resort to strikes, these employers arrogantly refused to recognize the union's just demands despite wartime living costs."¹ It is little wonder that workers were forced to strike. Their reaction was natural. Marx wrote: "If, during the phases of prosperity, when extra profits are made, he [the worker—Auth.] did not battle for a rise of wages, he would, taking the average of one industrial cycle, not even receive his *average wages*, or the *value* of his labour. It is the utmost height of folly to demand that while his wages are necessarily affected by the adverse phases of the cycle, he should exclude himself from compensation during the prosperous phases of the cycle."²

Lenin was talking about the same thing in 1901 when he wrote about Russian workers: "A few years ago industry was flourishing, trade was brisk, and the demand for workers was

¹ Philip S. Foner, *Op. cit.*, p. 618.

² K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1973, p. 70.

great. Nevertheless, the workers organised a number of strikes to improve their working conditions; they realised that they must not let the moment slip by, that they must take advantage of the time when the employers were making particularly high profits and it would be easier to win concessions from them."¹ In the United States, the World War II period was just such a phase of industrial upswing when the workers sought to improve working conditions and win concessions from the industrialists.

These, then, were the reasons behind the fact that the strike movement was on an even higher level during the war years than in the preceding decade.

In January 1942, a conflict came to a head in the steel industry that threatened to develop into a general industry-wide strike. It centered at the plants of four big corporations in the Little Steel group: Republic Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Inland Steel, and Youngstown Sheet and Tube. These companies employed a total of 175,000 workers who belonged to various trade union organizations which were not yet united into a single union, but acted under the leadership of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (CIO). The workers demanded a wage increase of one dollar a day and recognition of the SWOC as their official bargaining agent.

The steel companies refused to accept the demands, whereupon the workers decided to call a general strike. But the war was on, and the unions had pledged themselves to seeking settlement of all disputes through negotiations. The leadership of the SWOC, headed by Murray, again met with representatives of Little Steel, but with no results.

To avert a general strike, the SWOC deemed it necessary to lodge a complaint with the War Labor Board against the steel companies' policy of increasing work quotas without increasing wages. In the meantime, a broad discussion of the demands set forth took place at meetings of workers in the steel mills. On February 26, the War Labor Board began hearings on the dispute with the participation of representatives of Little Steel and the SWOC. The CIO delegates argued that the insignificant wage increase in April 1941 was more than offset by the

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 26.

13.3 per cent growth in the cost of living. Despite the fact that the monopolies and the board temporized, the workers continued to work and produce the steel needed for the war. The union's demands were studied and discussed at length, and it was only in July 1942 that the board finally handed down a final decision. It was one that could hardly satisfy the workers.

By its decision of July 16, 1942, the board rejected the workers' wage demands and ruled that wages must go no higher than 15 per cent above the level existing as of January 1, 1941.¹ Once wages reached that level they would in effect be frozen, regardless of the ever-rising cost of living. This approach, which came to be known as the Little Steel formula, was later used in other industries.

Locals of many unions refused to submit to the wage freeze and demanded wage increases above those set by the Little Steel formula. When their efforts to get the monopolies to negotiate failed, they resorted to local strikes.

Unlike these strikes, which were not sanctioned by the national bodies of the unions involved, strikes in the coal industry were organized by the United Mine Workers itself, headed by John L. Lewis. Of the 3,752 work stoppages in 1943, 430 were in the coal industry, involving 605,000 miners. As a result, of the 13,500,000 man-days lost that year, 9,346,000, or almost 70 per cent, were in that industry.²

Progressive public leaders pointed out that it was the refusal of the coal companies to make any concessions that obstructed peaceful settlement of the conflicts. At the end of April 1943, the threat of a general coal strike loomed. Roosevelt intervened, warning Lewis that if the miners did not resume work by 10 a.m. of May 1, the government would seize the coal mines on the basis of the Connally amendment to the 1940 Universal Military Conscription Law. On May 2, when a large number of workers did not show up for work, the President instructed Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes to take action. Despite this move, almost all the miners were now on strike.

¹ *The CIO News*, July 20, 1942; Vincent D. Sweeney, *The United Steelworkers of America. Twenty Years Later. 1936-1956*, Washington, 1956, pp. 52-53.

² *Labor Fact Book 7*, New York, 1945, p. 109; Clyde E. Dankert, *Contemporary Unionism in the United States*, New York, 1949, p. 53.

Ickes ordered resumption of work. The union did not obey the order. There followed a series of meetings between Lewis and Ickes, and radio addresses by Roosevelt, Lewis and the mineowners. However, the miners did not submit so easily to persuasion. In accordance with the President's order, Ickes established federal control over the mines.

In the meantime, strikes broke out at the Chrysler company. In Akron and Detroit, 79,000 workers stopped work at plants producing tyres for military vehicles. Almost half of the striking Chrysler workers soon returned to their jobs under pressure from the union's central leadership. However, 45,000 Chrysler workers continued to strike.

As for the miners, after a short intermission they continued their strikes. Roosevelt set a new back-to-work deadline. The miners agreed to return to work on June 7, on the condition that they would leave the mines again on June 20, if their demands were not met by then. The conflict between the miners and the government became protracted.

Citing the miners' strikes, the monopolies and some congressmen in Washington accused labor of using in their own interests the war-generated situation on the labor market, and increased their attacks against Roosevelt's labor legislation. Pointing to the "miners' revolt", certain members of Congress proposed a bill for a harsh new law providing for government intervention and use of force to settle labor conflicts.

The appearance of such a bill indicated the monopolies' growing dissatisfaction with the Wagner Act, which they veiled with talk about the conditions and demands of wartime. Shortly before, Roosevelt, anticipating congressional efforts to repeal the Wagner Act, had come out against the passage of any special law providing for the curtailment of labor's rights, including the right to strike, since on the whole the unions were fulfilling their pledge to abstain from striking in the war industry. Therefore, the President vetoed the bill. But Congress overrode the veto, after which, on June 25, 1943, Roosevelt had to sign the bill into law.

The law went down in the annals of Congress as the War Labor Disputes Act,¹ but it became more widely known as the

¹ *Compilation of Laws Relating to Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration*

Smith-Connally Act, so named after the congressmen who introduced it: Representative Howard Smith (Dem., Virginia), author of the 1940 Alien Registration Act, and Senator Tom Connally (Dem., Texas).

The Smith-Connally Act prohibited strikes in the defense industry. In the event of a strike threat, the President was empowered to take emergency steps. The law stated that he had the power and authority to place any plant, mine or facility into the possession of the United States whenever he "finds, after investigation, and proclaims that there is an interruption of the operation of such plant, mine, or facility as a result of a strike or other labor disturbance, that the war effort will be unduly impeded or delayed by such interruption, and that the exercise of such power and authority is necessary to insure the operation of such plant, mine or facility in the interest of the war effort".¹ Further, it was stipulated that any such plant, mine, or facility placed under the control of the government would be returned to its owners only when its production capacity was restored, for which a period of 60 days was given.²

The law further stated: "Whenever any plant, mine, or facility is in the possession of the United States, it shall be unlawful for any person (1) to coerce, instigate, induce, conspire with, or encourage any person, to interfere, by lock-out, strike, slow-down, or other interruption, with the operation of such plant, mine or facility, or (2) to aid any such lock-out, strike, slow-down, or other interruption interfering with the operation of such plant, mine, or facility by giving direction or guidance in the conduct of such interruption, or by providing funds for the conduct or direction thereof or for the payment of strike, unemployment, or other benefits to those participating therein...."

"Any person who willfully violates any provision of this section shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$5,000, or to imprisonment for not more than one year, or both."³ Besides

Between Employers and Employees, comp. by E. A. Lewis, Washington, 1955, pp. 515-21; Foster Rhea Dulles, *Labor in America. A History*, New York, 1949, pp. 343-44.

¹ *Compilation of Laws...*, p. 516.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 517.

this, unions were prohibited for the duration of the war and for the first six months thereafter from contributing funds to election campaigns during congressional and presidential elections.

The labor unions protested against the passage of the bill. They realized that it was a dangerous precedent which would be followed by new moves by reaction to cancel out liberal legislation. Furthermore, it would complicate the situation in the country, and make the main task—the defeat of fascism—that much more difficult. Condemning the passage of the Smith-Connally Act, Murray said that such a harsh measure was unjustified, since labor well understood its duty and was contributing to the cause of defeating the common enemy. William Green in a message to President Roosevelt described the bill as fascist legislation that struck “at the very heart of democratic processes and is violative of the fundamental principles upon which our ... government rests”.¹ However, taking into account the importance of the political factor and the need to maintain national unity, the unions restricted themselves only to protests.

Although the bill was passed, Roosevelt tried to avoid applying the new law. But he did not always succeed. A case in point was the conflict between the government and Montgomery Ward and Co., a big retail trading firm, over a contract to be concluded with the retail and wholesale workers' union.

This is how the conflict between the company and the government developed. On June 2, 1942, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins asked the National War Labor Board to look into the labor dispute at Montgomery Ward and Co. Chairman of the NWLB William H. Davis announced on June 30 that the board would examine the case, and on September 5 recommended that the company increase wages by five cents an hour. The company rejected the recommendation. In response, the NWLB on December 8, 1942 ordered the company to include in a collective bargaining agreement points ensuring the principle of hiring union members, arbitration, and the granting of seniority benefits. The company rejected this order, calling it illegal and uneconomical.

¹ Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*, p. 270.

At this point the President intervened. On December 12, 1942, Roosevelt wrote to the president of the company, Sewell Avery, in Chicago: “As Commander-in-Chief in time of war, I hereby direct Montgomery Ward and Company to comply, without further delay, with the NWLB's order of December eight, 1942.”¹ However, the subsequent correspondence between the War Labor Board and the President, on the one hand, and the company, on the other, showed that the latter, having carried out the order at one of its enterprises, continued to ignore it at others. The conflict became protracted and increasingly aggravated. Finally, on April 12, 1944, the union called a strike in Chicago, and threatened to extend it to all the company's enterprises and stores. Again, Roosevelt intervened, ordering the union to call off the strike. The union complied, but the company continued to defy all the directives of the War Labor Board. In the meantime, the bourgeois press was at work building an atmosphere of sympathy with the company. Roosevelt was subjected to attacks by both corporations and Republicans.

On December 27, 1944, the President instructed the War Department to seize all the company's trading establishments and place them under government control. In accordance with the provisions of the Smith-Connally Act and Section 9 of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, the War Department took under its control the enterprises of Montgomery Ward and Co. in New York, Detroit, Dearborn, Chicago, San Pablo, Denver, San Rafael, Portland and other cities. The company's assets were sequestered. When the troops seized the premises of the company's headquarters in Chicago, company president Avery resisted and had to be carried out bodily.

The Montgomery Ward and Co. case was a clear manifestation of reactionary efforts to challenge the Wagner Act and all liberal legislation. This was the crux of the conflict. Under the circumstances, Roosevelt saw no other alternative than to take the side of the labor union.

Despite the Smith-Connally Act, strikes continued to occur in 1944 and 1945. As a result of economic pressure on the

¹ F.D.R. Library, 407B, Montgomery Ward and Co., 1942, F.D.R. to Sewell Avery.

monopolies, the workers in many industries improved their material position. Wages went up considerably for workers engaged in the transportation of war materials by rail, motor vehicle and water. There was a particularly noticeable increase in the earnings of longshoremen in the East and West Coast unions. Miners, steelworkers, auto workers, workers in defense plants, communications workers and others achieved a considerable rise in standard of living.

The distinctive feature of most of the strikes during the war years was that they were local rather than industry-wide, and that they were initiated by union locals rather than by the central executive bodies of the unions involved. Besides this, the strikes were of short duration.

In 1943, AFL organizations accounted for 37.3 per cent of all the strikes and 19.6 per cent of all the workers involved in strikes that year.¹ In the first months of America's participation in the war some people thought that the AFL would play a more active role in strikes than the CIO. In a letter dated August 10, 1942, Murray, on behalf of the CIO, wrote to Green: "We have ... been deeply concerned about the stoppages which have been caused by certain affiliates of the AFL.... I am firmly of the opinion that no stoppages of work can be permitted.... The interest of our nation demands that there shall be continuous production and nothing must interfere."² However, the situation changed in 1943, when CIO unions turned out to be the more active in the strike struggle. Of all the workers involved in strikes in 1943, 44.3 per cent were CIO members; in numbers, this was twice as many as there were AFL strikers. While AFL strikes accounted for 10.7 per cent of the man-days idle, CIO strikes accounted for 16.1 per cent.³

As in other industries there were no general strikes in the auto industry. The union fulfilled its pledge to abstain from striking,⁴ but this of course did not rule out a large number of short local conflicts. For example, in May 1943 a strike took

¹ *Labor Fact Book* 7, p. 110.

² *The CIO News*, August 10, 1942.

³ *Labor Fact Book* 7, p. 111.

⁴ *Ford Facts*, June 1, 1943.

place at the Ford plant in River Rouge (Local 600).¹ In June, workers at the Packard plant struck.² In July, shop foremen at the Ford Motor plant in the town of Obey went on strike.³ In the summer of that year, a total of twelve strikes took place at various Chrysler plants.⁴

In 1944, strikes took place at Ford plants, the city transit system of Philadelphia, and telephone and telegraph companies in the state of Ohio. However, most of the strikes that year were small and sporadic.

In contrast with the preceding year, 1945 was marked by a rising tide of mass strikes. The American workingmen realized that after the war ended they would have to face their class antagonist at home in even sharper clashes than before. This thought was cogently expressed by Benjamin Lawrence, a steelworker and member of Local 1561 in East Providence, Rhode Island. In a letter to the editor of the *Steel Labor*, he wrote: "We, laborers of America, know we have strong enemies here at home who fight us under the cover of war. Do not fight them today, just keep 'stalling' until the war is over.... Do not fight two battles at the same time, the results would be terrible to us today if we lose at home; but we gain by destroying the enemies of the world."⁵

In the first six months of 1945, a total of 2,310 strikes took place, involving 1,250,000 workers. As a result of these strikes, over 1.5 million man-days were lost. With the expiration of the no-strike pledge, the unions were preparing for the great class battles that lay ahead.

At the beginning of the year, progressive forces within the CIO came out with the demand for an end to discrimination against Negroes. Negro workers were generally the first to be laid off when there was a cut-back in production. Employers used "low seniority" (a result of mass Negro unemployment in the prewar years) as a pretext for this form of discrimination. The CIO Political Action Committee launched a campaign calling for state legislation prohibiting discrimination against

¹ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1943.

² *Ibid.*, June 15, 1943.

³ *Ibid.*, July 15, 1943.

⁴ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1943.

⁵ *Steel Labor*, October 22, 1943.

Negroes. The Communist Party was in the front ranks of the defenders of the rights of the Negro people. It took an active part in getting democratically-inclined legislators to introduce bills in the states of New York, California, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Texas, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota and Pennsylvania. They were also working for the creation of a federal fair hiring practices commission.

In the spring of 1945, the miners resumed their strike struggle in Pennsylvania, Alabama and West Virginia. At the same time, strikes broke out at automobile plants in Detroit. In May, 225,000 maritime workers joined the struggle. Among the strikers were many Negroes. The number of Negro seamen had increased sharply during the war, but here too they were the first to be laid off. The maritime workers demanded of the War Shipping Administration that the wartime wage level be retained, particularly premium pay for war risk, which amounted to an average of about \$100 a month per seaman. The union sought the establishment of a 6-hour workday, with four shifts on all ships; a month's paid vacation; and severance pay. The union set about creating a strike fund of half a million dollars for possible nationwide strikes in the future. The War Shipping Administration offices were picketed.

Everything indicated that American unions were regrouping. The "no-strike" slogan gave way to the "No Contract, No Work" slogan. The unions were preparing to come out with a program of struggle to hold on to the standard of living already achieved and to raise it.

On the whole, the economic situation during the war, industry's interest in uninterrupted production, and the strike struggle promoted a higher living standard for American workers than they had during the years of neutrality, let alone the years of crisis and depression in the 1930s. However, before discussing the changes that took place in the economic position of the workers during the war, it would be well to say a few words about the general state of affairs in the country during that period.

In the first place, the United States was located tens of thousands of miles away from the war fronts, so that not a single bomb fell on its territory. The economy not only did not

suffer from the war but actually entered a period of unprecedented high activity. The military-industrial concerns and the banks reaped unheard-of profits during World War II, as can be seen from the following figures (in billions of dollars)¹:

Profits	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total
Before taxes	9.3	17.0	21.0	24.5	23.3	19.0	114.1
After taxes	6.4	9.3	9.4	10.5	10.4	8.3	54.3

In the steel industry alone, corporate profits from 1940 through 1943 amounted to 1.2 billion after taxes.² The data on other industries, especially heavy industry, confirm the trend toward an inordinate growth of profits during the war. Of the \$54.3 billion in profits (after taxes) made during the war years, the monopolies paid out almost \$25.9 billion to their stockholders. The rest constituted undistributed profits. The average annual profits (after taxes) for the period 1940-1945 were about \$8.7 billion, compared with average profits after taxes of \$3.3 billion in 1936-1939. Wartime corporate profits after taxes, therefore, rose by more than 160 per cent.³ The superprofits allowed the monopolies to make concessions to the working class and to satisfy its demands during the boom years in order to avoid undesirable and costly interruptions in production.

In the second place, ever since the Civil War of 1861-1865, America had been spared the ravages of war, and the standard of living of workers in the United States was higher than that of working people in other countries. The war increased this difference, sharply worsening the economic position of workers in the other countries at war, while actually improving it in the United States. The Russian language newspaper *Russian Voice*, for example, had this to say about life in Chicago: "We are living a quiet and relatively prosperous life because there, overseas, young people are giving their lives for the freedom of all mankind.... There are no shortages of anything in Chicago as yet. There is plenty of everything, and

¹ *The Economic Almanac*, 1960, p. 418 (figures rounded—Auth.).

² *Steel Labor*, January 21, 1944.

³ *New Masses*, November 6, 1945.

people eat and dress well."¹ That commentary could have been made about many other cities. The partial rationing on canned foods (soups, fruits and vegetables), butter, meat and fats, introduced in the spring of 1943, did not have any serious effect on the standard of living.

Most Americans bumped into the war only through the newspaper, radio or motion pictures. Those who had relatives or friends in the armed forces also knew about it from their letters and stories. Never threatened by air raids, American cities got along without black-outs. Only on April 18, 1942 a black-out was ordered in the Atlantic coast zone. People visiting America from Europe were struck by the brightness of American cities at night. The newspaper quoted earlier gave this description of Chicago: "Millions of lights strike the eye. Street lamps and illuminated store windows make everything as visible as in daytime."² And in another issue it wrote: "San Francisco glowed with a myriad of lights. The skyscrapers were aglow with a patchwork of lighted windows.... Neon signs on the downtown streets flashed with the glare of molten metal, stars were dimmed by the bright light flooding the city."³ All this engendered a sense of complacency, and for many even indifference, to the tragedy being played out on the fields of Europe and Asia.

In the third place, the United States entered the war only in December 1941, and began active land operations in the decisive areas only at the end of 1942 (the African campaign), with subsequent action in 1943 (the invasion of Italy) and the large-scale operation in the summer of 1944 (the landing in Normandy). Relatively few families experienced the grief of losing relatives or dear ones in the war. Compared with the other nations, US casualties were low.

Further, as a result of the industrial boom, employment increased sharply, and for a short period of time unemployment was reduced almost to nil, which was also very much due to the fact that a great number of Americans were in the armed forces. The demand for labor power had already grown in the

¹ *Русский голос*, August 4, 1943.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, May 19, 1944.

period of neutrality. After Pearl Harbor the need for workers and especially skilled workers became even greater. This explains the unprecedented influx of women and Negroes into industry and transportation. In 1944, almost 19.4 million women were employed in the economy.¹ In November of that year, there were 16,130,000 women working in non-agricultural establishments, as compared with 10,620,000 four years earlier.² While in 1940 women made up 28 per cent of the total work force, the figure went up to 37 per cent in 1945.³

Greater than ever before was the influx of Negro, Puerto Rican and Mexican workers not only into agriculture but industry as well. This created the illusion of equal employment opportunities. At the beginning of 1944, of the 5,500,000 Negro workers in the country, 1,500,000, or 36 per cent, worked in defense plants.⁴ The flow of Negro workers into industry caused a rapid growth of the Negro population in the cities of the North and West.⁵

War production increased the demand for skilled workers, creating conditions for a large part of the unskilled to receive vocational training and for many others to raise their job qualifications. The number of untrained workers in the labor force declined, while the number of skilled and especially semiskilled workers grew. This applied also to Negro workers. The total number of skilled workers and specialists among them rose from 500,000 to 1,000,000 between 1940 and 1944. The number of organized Negro workers grew. In the steel industry, for example, the number of Negro union members grew from 35,000 in 1940 to 70,000 in 1943.⁶ The situation was similar in most industries. Raising one's qualifications was one of the ways for a significant part of the unskilled and especially semiskilled workers to earn higher wages. The heightened demand for labor power stimulated an increase in the number

¹ Eli Ginzberg and Hyman Berman, *The American Worker in the Twentieth Century*, p. 267.

² *Labor Fact Book* 7, p. 163.

³ *Economic Forces in the U.S.A. in Facts and Figures*, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, 1960, p. 194.

⁴ *Русский голос*, February 10, 1944.

⁵ Hyman Lumer, *War Economy and Crisis*, p. 116.

⁶ *Proceedings of the Second Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America*, Cleveland, 1944, p. 43.

of working members per family, which also promoted growth in workers' real incomes.

The hourly wage rates and corresponding weekly earnings of workers grew.¹ Although in varying degrees, hourly wages went up in all industries. To cite one example, the average hourly wage for United States Steel Corp. employees climbed from \$0.90 in 1940 to \$1.40 in 1946.²

Overtime work, which under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was subject to a time-and-one-half rate of pay, was widely practised in industry. The monopolies sought to get a longer workweek established in an effort to get around this provision of the law. But the resistance of the labor unions and the threat of strikes compelled employers to refrain from encroachments of this kind and to pay the overtime rate in accordance with the law.

However, the need for a longer workweek became more and more obvious. On February 9, 1943, Roosevelt issued order No. 9301, lengthening the workweek from 40 to 48 hours, but requiring that all hours in excess of 40 per week should be compensated at the rate established by law.³ This order empowered the chairman of the War Manpower Commission to establish during wartime a minimum 48-hour workweek either in an entire industry or in certain areas of the country.

In a number of war industries which had huge orders the workweek was longer than in others. It went as high as 60 hours, and sometimes even higher. The 40-hour week was retained at small enterprises.

Under the impact of the above factors, the overall wage fund doubled, going from \$48.6 billion in 1940 to \$102 billion in 1943.⁴ Beginning from 1941, the wage fund grew an average of \$20 billion a year. The weekly earnings of workers also doubled, as can be seen from the following figures on average weekly wages of production workers in the manufacturing industries (in dollars):

¹ *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957*, p. 94.

² *The 1959 Steel Strike. The United Steelworkers of America*, Pittsburgh, 1961, p. 6.

³ *Proceedings of the Second Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America*, p. 45.

⁴ *The Economic Almanac for 1944-1945*, New York, 1944, p. 75.

1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
23.86	25.20	29.58	36.65	43.14	46.08	44.39

Thus, average weekly wages showed steady growth up to and including 1944, but began to decline somewhat by the end of 1945.

Weekly wages also grew in the steel, coal, and construction industries. The wage increases in these industries were not accidental. The miners, for example, staged more strikes than any other group of workers during the war years, winning higher wages as a result. In the construction industry the rate and scope of building were very high.

A different picture was observed, however, in retail and wholesale trade, the services field, and in other areas not directly connected with federal war contracts. In wholesale trade, the average weekly wage was \$29.82 in 1939 and \$43.94 in 1945; in retail trade, \$23.14 and \$31.55; and in the service field (laundry work, for example), \$17.64 and \$27.73.¹ A closer look at the wage statistics for the manufacturing industries reveals the same tendency. The more an enterprise had to do with the production of goods to satisfy civilian needs and the less it was related to the production of steel, cannon and munitions, aircraft, military trucks, armored cars, tanks, jeeps, ships, submarines, etc., the lower were the wages and earnings of the workers. In general, wages tended to rise in civilian and non-durable goods production too, but their growth rate lagged far behind that in the defense industry and in durable goods production.²

From 1939 through 1945, average annual earnings in industry as a whole, computed on the basis of 40 hours per week, went up from \$1,264 to \$2,189. Growth in annual earnings was also registered in the separate industries. Thus, in mining it was from \$1,367 to \$2,621; in construction, from \$1,268 to \$2,600; in manufacturing, from \$1,363 to \$2,517; and in transportation, from \$1,723 to \$2,734.³ These figures do not include earnings for work performed in excess of 40

¹ *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957*, p. 94.

² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

hours a week, compensated at a time-and-one-half rate as established by the 1938 law.

Thus, during the war, for the first time since the decade of crises, stagnation, unemployment and extremely low incomes, American workers were able to find jobs and win wage increase. This growth was promoted not only by the industrial boom but also by the mass strike struggle on the eve of and during World War II.

The status of American workers, especially those in low-paid categories, could have been improved much more had not wage levels been stabilized by application of the Little Steel formula mentioned earlier. That formula, setting limits to wage increase, clearly served the interests of the monopolies. On April 27, 1942, Roosevelt said: "Wages can and should be kept at existing scales."¹ On October 2, 1942, Congress passed a new wage and price control law, empowering the President to issue a general order to stabilize prices and wages at levels existing as of September 15, 1942. In accordance with this law, the President on October 3, 1942 signed executive order No. 9250, prohibiting any increase or decrease in wages without the approval of the War Labor Board.

True, the government also stabilized rents and prices of consumer goods. On April 8, 1943, the President put a ban on rent increases and approved a list of commodities subject to price decreases. At the same time, the Little Steel formula was still invoked with respect to wage rates. While wages were subjected to control by both industry and the government, the controls over rents and prices were enforced only by federal control officers.

The unions opposed the Little Steel formula as a method of freezing wages and fought to have it scrapped. John T. Dunlop, professor of economics at Harvard University, wrote: "The unchanged formula became a symbol of a grievance which grew in irritation."² The unions pointed to the continually rising cost of living. According to estimates by government agencies it had gone up 30 per cent (well over the

¹ Harold W. Metz, *Labor Policy of the Federal Government*, Washington, 1945, p. 171.

² George P. Shultz, John R. Coleman, *Labor Problems: Cases and Readings*, p. 291.

stipulated 15 per cent), while AFL and CIO figures showed a 45 per cent increase.¹ As for the War Labor Board, it continued to assert that the workingman's take-home pay corresponded to the subsistence minimum. As a result of a stubborn strike struggle, some union locals succeeded in overcoming the resistance of the corporations and the government Control Board officials, winning wage rises for their workers regardless of the Little Steel formula. But all this was not achieved without struggle.

A simple comparison of wage and cost-of-living indices does not give a full picture of the standard of living of working-class families, although it does help us to understand the overall trend. Even data on average annual expenditures do not reflect the whole complexity of life and cannot reveal the differences in economic position among the many categories of workers with varying standards of living. They can only indicate the overall pattern in absolute figures. This is what is shown by the following data on average annual expenditures required to maintain a family of four, calculated by the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics at the University of California (in dollars)²:

	March 1942	March 1944
Food	793.94	920.97
Clothing	245.04	279.73
Home payments, rent, public utilities	408.00	408.00
Home repairs and maintenance	116.05	117.54
Furniture and appliances	15.00	15.80
Miscellaneous expenses (including medical care)	672.00	681.81
Taxes	72.71	245.28
Interest	258.08	299.00
Annual total	2,580.82	2,964.13
Weekly total	49.61	57.00

Thus, average annual expenses went up \$383.31 in just two years. The increase in outlays for food and taxes was particularly high (\$299.60).

¹ NYP Library, Vito Marcantonio's Papers, IX "Labor and Labor Unions", Box No. 2, Folder "UAW-CIO": A Resolution "Local 259, to President F. D. Roosevelt"; Philip Murray, *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

² *Labor Fact Book* 6, p. 123; *Labor Fact Book* 7, p. 127.

We might also cite the minimum budget for a family of four, computed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the State of New York as of June 15, 1943. This budget amounted to \$1,803 per year (including tax payments), or \$35 a week.¹ Another budget of interest was the one computed for an average worker's family in a worker settlement. In Braddock, Pennsylvania, located 10 miles from Pittsburgh, where steelworkers employed by the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Co. lived, the cost of living went up 30 per cent during the war. In January 1945, the average family there spent \$57 a week, or \$2,964 a year.² According to a union study, 55 per cent of the families had incomes exceeding current expenses, so that part of their incomes could go into savings. But for almost half of the families expenses exceeded income, making no saving possible.

It would be wrong to think, however, that improved conditions during the war marked the beginning of a period of prosperity. Though some American economists and historians come to just this conclusion,³ analysis of the changes in the economic situation of the workers during the war brings one to the indisputable fact that although the majority of the American working class saw an improvement in its condition, low-paid workers remained in difficult straits. It must be understood that so far we have been dealing with average wages—in industry as a whole and in individual industries. Our discussion of cost of living was also based on average figures. But it should always be borne in mind that a large part of the workers had lower incomes and higher deficits than those making the average wage or more. To draw conclusions on the basis of average figures, as do many American scholars, means to disregard the interests of a considerable part of the working class which lived in far from prosperous circumstances during the war.

This particularly applied to Negro, Puerto Rican and

¹ Department of Archives and Manuscripts, the Catholic University of America, Washington D. C., Box No. 1, Folder District No. 2, April 1944.

² *The Braddock Steelworker*. United Steelworkers of America, Pittsburgh, 1945, pp. 3, 32.

³ John A. Garraty, *The History of the United States. A History of Men and Ideas*, London, 1968, p. 766; Howard R. Smith, *Economic History of the United States*, New York, 1955, p. 634.

Mexican workers. They had jobs, and their earnings went up, but one must not forget where they stood and what their standard of living was on the eve of the war. It was only in comparison with the preceding period that their life during the war seemed better. The following words of Karl Marx can be applied to just such workers: "You must not ... allow yourselves to be carried away by the high-sounding per cents in the *rate* of wages. You must always ask, What was the *original* amount?"¹ Even official government statistics cannot conceal the fact that this large segment of the American working class remained in a difficult situation.

During the war, poor working conditions and inadequate safety engineering moved the broad masses of working people to righteous indignation. Employers paid little heed to the fact that the increased workweek of 60 or more hours caused overstrain, especially among women, adolescents and elderly workers, and this in turn brought about an increase in accidents. According to data from the division of health and labor protection of the War Production Board, between December 1941 and January 1944, some 37,600 workers were killed, 210,000 maimed, and 4.5 million temporarily disabled in industrial accidents.

Such are the facts concerning the economic position of American workers during World War II. On the whole, it improved in comparison with the preceding decade, but the degree of improvement was quite different for different sections of the working class. Besides, the improvement proved to be temporary. Toward the end of the war, especially after the victory over Germany, a trend toward lower weekly and annual earnings was already in evidence. For example, between victory in Europe and victory in Japan, the average weekly wage of the steelworkers dropped from \$56.32 (in April 1945) to \$42.70 (in September 1945), or by almost 24 per cent.² A similar situation existed in other industries. These were signs presaging the inevitable exacerbation of the class struggle that was to come.

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 38.

² *Proceedings of the Third Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America*, Cleveland, May 11-18, 1946, p. 21.

CHAPTER V

PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR UNITY

World War II brought about many changes in the international labor movement. Rapidly expanding war production affected the structure of the working class in the capitalist countries involved in the war. Also, the scope of industry grew, accelerating the formation of a working class in colonial and dependent countries.

In most European and Asian countries the working class lost what it had gained in the prewar decades. Communist and Workers' parties were outlawed and forced underground, and most trade unions were banned. The new fascist order put workers in the position of slaves bereft of rights to defend their vital interests. The workday was virtually unlimited, and labor was further intensified. Workers were deprived of their right to organize and strike. Fascism stripped them of their political rights and brought them great economic distress. But even in these circumstances the working class became the leading force in the Resistance movement in occupied countries.

In the course of the struggle, the workers resorted to mass strikes. In France, the German administration felt the impact of worker discontent as early as the spring of 1941, when 120,000 miners in the departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais went out on strike in May and June. In 1943, there were strikes by steelworkers, metal workers, builders, textile workers and in other industries. The reactivated General Confederation of Labor soon headed the struggle, distributing thousands of leaflets and underground newspapers calling for strike actions and street demonstrations. Railroad workers of the Paris

region and municipal employees staged strikes in 1944. Subsequently, separate strike actions developed into general strikes and ultimately grew into an armed uprising. In Czechoslovakia, notwithstanding a law banning strikes, 25 strikes were registered as early as 1939. In 1941, they occurred more frequently and became markedly political in character.

French, Czechoslovak, Polish, Norwegian and Belgian workers engaged extensively in war plant and railroad sabotage. In addition to such acts as disabling machinery, the anti-fascists used the slow-down as a common form of sabotage. "Work without haste" was the motto of the Czechoslovak and Belgian workers. In March and April 1945, sabotage in occupied Norway grew to such an extent that transportation and war production were brought to a near standstill.

The European workers' struggle against fascism soon evolved into armed resistance. Guerrilla detachments began to operate successfully in the occupied countries and were of great help to the Allied forces.

The workers would not reconcile themselves to the destruction of their trade unions. In 1940, French workers started to form the first clandestine people's and unemployed committees to take the place of the dissolved unions. By September 1940, there were more than 110 such committees in the Paris region alone.

In 1941, Norwegian workers also initiated underground organizations, and by October 1942 an underground trade union center, which included representatives of the Communist Party, had been formed. In Belgium, resistance committees were created, through which the workers played a leading role in the liberation movement.

Important changes took place in the labor movements in the countries aligned against Hitler. The working class and its organizations grew, and the working people became more politically conscious and active. They put their all into their work, fully realizing the need for maximum effort in order to achieve an early victory over fascism. At the same time, they expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the common man had to bear all the hardships of the war while the monopolies continued to rake in fabulous profits.

The workers became better organized during the war years. Before the war the world's trade unions had a total membership of about 40,000,000. By the war's end it exceeded 70,000,000.

The most important phenomenon of the war years, however, was the greatly increased influence of the Communist parties. The Communist parties proved their devotion to the national and class interests of the proletariat. As leaders in the anti-fascist struggle they took the worst fascist blows and suffered heavy losses.

In 1939, the Communist parties in the capitalist countries had a total of 1,750,000 members; by 1946 this figure had grown to 5,000,000.

The heightened influence of the Communist parties could be seen in the results of parliamentary elections. In Norway, the Communist Party won 11 parliamentary seats in the October 1945 elections. As for the French and Italian Communists, their selfless struggle in the Resistance movement won them widespread renown as true and fearless patriots. As a result, by the end of the war the Communist parties became the largest and most influential parties in both France and Italy, where their representatives were in the governments until 1947.

During the war the striving for international unity increased among the masses of workers. The struggle against fascism drew workers with different political views and sentiments closer together. At the same time, the heroic struggle of the Soviet people was an inspiration to the workers in the capitalist countries, especially the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. All this helped strengthen ties between the trade unions of Britain, France, the USA and the USSR. The need for labor unity was becoming obvious. The main question now was who would step forward first, who would take the initiative in putting the question of unity into the context of practical action. The initiative was taken by Soviet trade unions and their leading center, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU). In the autumn of 1941, they made a proposal to the British working people, suggesting, in the interest of furthering their common cause, the creation of an Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee.

It was not easy for the British trade union leaders to accept this offer of cooperation due to their previous positions. But the war and the sentiments of broad segments of the British public compelled them to do so. In September 1941, the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) met in Edinburgh and adopted a resolution pledging support to Soviet Russia and calling for cooperation with the AUCCTU. The TUC leadership agreed to the creation of an Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee (ASTUC). The Committee began its work in Moscow on October 15, 1941, during the most critical days of the city's defense. In December of that year, a Soviet delegation went to London for the second session of the ASTUC. There the question arose of bringing into the ASTUC labor representatives from other countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, the United States included.

During the decades preceding the war the Communist Party of the USA had done a great deal in spreading the ideas of socialism and proletarian internationalism in the American labor movement. However, it was small in numbers and could not gain sufficient influence to win a mass following. The Socialist Party, which had lost its ties with the masses of workers, was even less capable of doing this. The Gompersites in the trade unions, on the other hand, had long been distracting the workers from political issues and foisting upon them the philosophy of "pure" trade unionism. They worked to stifle the spirit of proletarian internationalism, fostering sentiments of separateness and national exclusiveness.

In contrast to Socialists and trade union conservatives the Communist Party of the USA rendered a great service in combatting this attitude as it fought for working-class cohesion and unity of action. Unremittingly, it called for common efforts on the part of Soviet, American and British trade unions. "American labor," William Z. Foster wrote, "could lend much greater power to the world war effort of the United Nations if it were linked up closely with the British and Soviet trade unions. Such unity of action among these three labor movements and allies is basically necessary to strengthen the alliance and common fighting action of the United Nations; to increase production on an international scale; and to provide additional guarantees for ensuring friendly collaboration

among the United Nations and peoples in the organization of a just and lasting peace in the postwar period."¹

The American Communists felt that international labor unity should become the mainstay of all anti-fascist forces. A month before the United States entered the war, the fourth convention of the CIO called for the establishment of contacts with the free trade union movements of other countries for the purpose of cooperating in the struggle against fascism and to guarantee a just and lasting peace after Hitler's defeat. This demand was voiced by the industrial unions, which in those years represented the left wing of the American labor movement. After the creation of the Anglo-Soviet Committee, the CIO called upon the AFL and other American trade unions to become affiliated with it.

The second session of the ASTUC agreed on the need to expand the Committee to include American trade unions. In accordance with a resolution to that effect, Walter M. Citrine, general secretary of the TUC, came to the United States in May 1942 to hold talks with representatives of American labor.

Increasing numbers of American and British workers supported the idea of labor unity among the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. It would seem, therefore, that Citrine's mission should have succeeded; however, for a number of reasons, it did not.

At its second session the ASTUC had discussed the possibility of inviting the AFL, CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods to affiliate with it. But once in the United States, Citrine negotiated with the AFL only. And this was not accidental, because in the preceding years the AFL and the TUC had established strong ties. In 1937, after a long interval, the AFL had again joined the Amsterdam International. Thus, the AFL and the TUC were members of the same international organization, one to which the CIO had no access.

Soon after arriving, Citrine held private talks with AFL leaders. Little is known about his position at these meetings. Some researchers say that he tried to obtain the AFL's consent to include the CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods in the planned Anglo-Soviet-American Trade Union Council. It followed

¹ *The Communist*, No. 8, September 1942, p. 710.

from what TUC leaders said at the time that Citrine had come with instructions to enlist all organized American workers into the Council.

But how conscientiously Citrine carried out the will of the rank and file is hard to say. What proposals he made and what debates revolved around them during the private talks he had with the AFL leaders remains unknown. "The A. F. of L. Executive Council," Foster wrote, "met in high secrecy on the matter, arrived at its decision, gave Citrine his answer, and he departed to England, without the great rank and file of the American labor movement being allowed to express its opinion in any way on the questions under discussion, or even to know what was being decided about them."¹ Only later did it become known that the AFL executive council declined the proposal to affiliate with the Anglo-Soviet Committee.

There was nothing surprising about this decision. In making it the AFL leaders were obviously counting on prejudices among American workers and their passiveness with respect to foreign policy issues. But the argument they used to justify their unwillingness to cooperate with Soviet trade unions was that these unions were purportedly not free organizations and did not represent the interests of the Soviet working class.

Thus Citrine's mission failed because of the AFL leadership's stance. It could have succeeded had Citrine addressed himself to all the labor organizations of America, rather than to the AFL alone. But since the AFL considered the CIO an "illegal" organization, the general council of the TUC was reluctant to take such a step lest it annoy the AFL.

In refusing to cooperate with Soviet trade unions and rejecting the idea of international unity, the AFL leaders were counting on the passiveness of the rank and file. But in fact things were changing. AFL workers had become more active, and their political awareness and interest in foreign policy had grown. The leadership's decision drew protestations from the membership. Even stronger protests came from the CIO, whose progressive democratic position on many labor issues we have already noted.

From the very outset the CIO leadership was not a

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 714.

homogeneous group. Alongside the left figures, there were rightists like James Carey, Emil Rieve and others who for the time being were not openly showing their true colors. Not only their past, but also an identity of views aligned some of them with such former "Social-Democrats" from the AFL as Max Zaritsky and David Dubinsky. Both groups were anti-Communist and were united in their animosity toward the Soviet Union. However, the situation in the country at the time, and the balance of forces within the leadership and the CIO as a whole, were not favorable to the rightists. The CIO's policy on many questions, including international relations, was determined by a left-center coalition, thanks to which, on the whole, the CIO played a positive role in the struggle for the creation of a world trade union federation.

The CIO sought representation in international affairs on an equal footing with the AFL. It is not surprising that Citrine's virtual refusal to deal with any organization besides the AFL provoked the displeasure of the CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods. In August 1942, the leaders of these organizations issued a protest against the actions of Walter Citrine and the AFL executive council. Many workers supported their statement. CIO unions demanded broader cooperation with Soviet trade unions. The National Maritime Union, for example, condemned the AFL's decision and indicated that it would make its own contacts with the Soviet seamen's union and with the maritime unions of the United Nations (the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition).¹ A United Automobile Workers convention called upon the CIO to initiate a conference of the trade unions of the United Nations.² The eighth and ninth conventions of the United Electrical Workers in 1942 and 1943 urged the CIO executive board to join the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee and to encourage other American unions to follow suit.

Conventions of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, Fur and Leather Workers, Food, Tobacco and Agricultural Workers, and United Farm Equipment Workers made similar demands. CIO locals also endorsed this course toward cooperation among unions of the three countries. The vast

¹ *The Communist*, No. 8, September 1942, p. 715.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 715-16.

majority of the CIO membership and many members of AFL and independent unions were in favor of joint actions with Soviet trade unions and of convening a world trade union conference.

The national conventions of the CIO played an important role in the mass movement for joint action with Soviet trade unions. As early as 1941 the fourth convention of the CIO requested the executive board "to take practical steps to make contact with the representatives of the free democratic trade union movements throughout the world so as to insure the closest possible cooperation of organized workers in all countries in the present struggle against Hitlerism and to further insure that once Hitler is defeated organized labor shall be prepared to participate in the formulating of peace that will guarantee political freedom, industrial democracy, economic security and opportunity of lasting peace".¹

In a message of greetings to the fifth national convention of the CIO held in Boston in November 1942, the AUCCTU stressed that united actions by labor organizations were necessary for mobilizing forces and using them to achieve a speedy victory over the enemy, and successfully resolving the problems of postwar world development. On its part, the convention declared that the CIO would "continue to take all necessary steps to establish international labor cooperation with direct participation by the British and Soviet unions, the AFL, the CIO, and Railway Labor, and the unions of the other United Nations, including our Latin American allies".²

The CIO's stand influenced the sentiments of many members of AFL unions. President Flore of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union declared that "the workers of Russia, the United States and Great Britain and all their allies must stand and fight together".³ A group of 150 officers of AFL unions in the New York area went even further than merely make declarations. They formed a Committee to Promote Unity of the Trade Union Movements of the United Nations.⁴ Hundreds of local AFL unions, more than a dozen

¹ *CIO, Proceedings*, 1941, p. 330.

² *Ibid.*, 1942, pp. 364-65.

³ *The Communist*, No. 8, September 1942, p. 716.

⁴ *Ibid.*

State Federations and a number of international unions favored full cooperation by all sections of the American labor movement with the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee and AFL membership in it.¹

But even so, these actions were not enough to overcome the conservative position held by most AFL leaders. The progressive forces were unable to alter the course of the labor reactionaries in favor of joint action by US and Soviet trade unions.

The 62nd AFL convention, after hearing the report of the Committee on International Relations, approved the decisions of the executive council. Many declarations were made about the necessity of mutual understanding and cooperation among the workers of all countries. However, the convention adopted a resolution which in effect rejected the idea of a joint trade union committee of the three countries.² Addressing the delegates, a TUC representative, Bryn Roberts, present at the convention, agreed with the idea of creating a separate Anglo-American committee, although he did voice the hope that in the future the American trade union movement would take part in an organization that would include US, British and Soviet representatives.

One of the important points in the 62nd AFL convention's resolution on international ties had to do with the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). This was not accidental. When World War II began, some leaders of the IFTU took refuge in London, where they formed a temporary Emergency International Trade Union Council. Nevertheless, as an organization, the Amsterdam International was inactive during the war. But even during the years of its greatest influence before the war, it had never been a truly worldwide international labor organization.

The idea of real international trade union unity in the form of a world organization met with stubborn resistance from the reactionary forces in the trade union movement in the Western countries. They feared that in a new organization built on a democratic basis they would be unable to dictate their own

¹ *The Communist*, November 1942, pp. 934-35.

² Bryn Roberts, *The American Labour Split and Allied Unity*, London, 1943, p. 157.

policy. At the 1942 AFL convention, the Federation's top leaders praised the IFTU, citing its "vitality and aggressiveness under trying circumstances".¹ A resolution adopted at that convention spoke of the need for cooperation between the AFL and the IFTU.

The fate of the IFTU was a subject of no less concern to British trade union figures, for it was they who sponsored its creation and played a leading role in it. But the British understood that they would not be able to revive the International in its previous form. Walter Schevenels, general secretary of the IFTU, also agreed with this. At a session of the Emergency International Trade Union Council held in September 1942, Schevenels, with the backing of the British, raised the question of reorganizing the International.² A special committee was set up to study the question. In 1943, the Emergency Council twice returned to this subject. At a session in April a proposal was made to admit Soviet trade unions into the IFTU, and henceforth not to limit membership to one union center per country. However, no decision was reached at that session. Later, the Emergency Council again took up the question of reorganization. The AUCCTU, the CIO and the rank and file of the TUC were calling for the convocation of an international trade union conference for the purpose of setting up a world trade union organization. The reformist union leaders, however, wanted to "keep the movement by and large in line with the long established IFTU traditions and conceptions".³

Evidence that the AFL leaders were thinking in terms of reviving the Amsterdam International along previous lines was their attitude to the CIO and Soviet trade unions. Once it gained the TUC's consent on the formation of a bilateral Anglo-American Committee instead of an Anglo-Soviet-American Council, the AFL leadership demanded of the TUC repudiation of any ties with the CIO. This line was endorsed by the AFL 1943 convention.

In 1943, the AFL leadership continued its campaign against

¹ *The American Federationist*, November 1942, p. 14.

² W. A. Schevenels, *Forty-Five Years International Federation of Trade Unions*, Brussels, 1956, p. 302.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

cooperation with the Soviet trade unions. At the 63rd convention in Boston, held in October of that year, it was declared that any such cooperation would be regarded as aiding and abetting communism in the USA.

While the reformists were discussing reorganization of the Amsterdam International, Soviet trade unions and progressive forces in other countries were working for the convocation of an international trade union conference. At the British 75th Trades Union Congress in Southport in 1943, Soviet representative N. Shvernik once again proposed that the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee be broadened to include trade unions from the United States and other anti-Axis countries. The Soviet delegation spoke in favor of holding a world conference as soon as possible.¹ The delegates supported the proposal. Moreover, the congress adopted a resolution requesting the TUC to prepare and convene the conference in June 1944.

This decision was in keeping with the aspirations of the broad masses of workers in both Britain and America. In his speech at the sixth constitutional convention of the CIO, Philip Murray declared that the "time has come to depart from mere pious expressions, the moment for action is at hand. We must accomplish international labor unity now as an imperative need for the most effective prosecution of a people's war and for a people's peace."² The convention adopted a resolution in the same spirit. It said, in part: "In this great struggle for national survival the CIO believes that our basic principles can only be protected and assured through international labor collaboration. This is an immediate and imperative need to weld the unity of labor, the governments, and the peoples of the United Nations to assure the most effective prosecution of the war against the Axis."³

The convention now called upon the CIO leadership to undertake a number of urgent measures. The resolution stated further: "Therefore, be it resolved, that the President of the Congress of Industrial Organizations is hereby authorized to immediately communicate with the heads of the AFL and

¹ Н. М. Шверник, Речь на 75-м Конгрессе британских тред-юнионов в Саутпорте, Moscow, 1943, p. 16.

² *Daily Worker*, November 1, 1943.

³ *Resolutions of the Sixth CIO Convention*, Philadelphia, 1943, pp. 18-19.

Railroad Brotherhoods and of the labor movements of the United Nations, to convey the urgent desire of the CIO to associate with these labor organizations in the convening of an international trade union conference of representatives of the labor movements of all the United Nations."¹

An AFL convention was held almost at the same time as the CIO convention. The report of the Committee on International Relations stated: "Collaboration with the British Trades Union Congress should be continued; the A. F. of L. is unable to collaborate with government-controlled Russian unions."²

The difference between the AFL and CIO resolutions indicated two entirely different approaches to the question of international working-class unity. In January 1944, the AFL declined the TUC's offer to take part in the World Trade Union Conference set for June of that year.

The CIO, on the contrary, gave its full support to the conference, and accepted the TUC's invitation to take part in it. However, the conference was not convened in June. One of the reasons for the failure was that British union leaders themselves were not very energetic in the struggle for unity. They were quite active in another direction. In 1944, IFTU missions, headed by Citrine and Schevenels, visited Italy, France and Belgium, everywhere conveying the message that "the IFTU was very much alive and that it was in a position to contribute to a very great extent to the creation of the World Federation embracing all Trade Unions."³ The Soviet trade unions, meanwhile, continued to work tirelessly to expedite the convocation of the conference. The fourth session of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee in October 1944 decided to convene the conference in January or February 1945, for which purpose a preparatory committee including representatives from the TUC, AUCCTU and CIO was set up.

The CIO held its seventh national convention in November 1944, in Chicago, where the question of creating an international federation of trade unions was one of the most

¹ *Ibid.*

² *The American Federationist*, November 1943, p. 18.

³ W. A. Schevenels, *Op. cit.*, p. 322.

important on the agenda. The convention adopted a resolution to take part in the work of the preparatory committee and in the proceedings of the constituent conference of trade unions in London, planned for the beginning of 1945.¹ In his speech, Murray elaborated on the question of creating an international trade union center. Criticizing the Amsterdam International, he said that even if its constitution were amended to give the CIO the right to membership status, the CIO would still favor the creation of a new international labor organization. Murray's position was influenced not only by progressive forces, but also by the rivalry that existed between the AFL and CIO. Soon after the fourth session of the Anglo-Soviet Committee, the AFL executive council decided to boycott the forthcoming conference. This decision was ratified by the 64th convention, held on November 20, 1944, in New Orleans.²

In early December 1944, the preparatory committee held a meeting, at which the CIO delegation took a firm position. When their British partners tried to push through the idea of reviving the Amsterdam International, Sidney Hillman, on behalf of the CIO, issued an emphatic protest in line with the above decision of the seventh CIO convention in Chicago.

In the meantime, the AFL leaders were still thinking in terms of reviving the Amsterdam International. Nor did the TUC completely discard the idea; however, the British felt it possible to somewhat reorganize the International to adapt it to the new situation. But the general council of the IFTU, with the active participation of the AFL leadership, refused to favor a change in the IFTU's constitution to permit the entrance of the CIO and the Soviet trade unions.³

Finally, despite the opposition from the AFL representative, the Emergency Council of the Amsterdam International decided to send a project for the reconstruction of the IFTU to the forthcoming International Trade Union Congress in London.⁴

¹ *Final Proceedings of the Seventh Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, Chicago, 1944, pp. 297, 298.

² *The American Federationist*, December 1944, p. 15.

³ *Political Affairs*, March 1945, p. 223.

⁴ *Trade Union World*, London, January-February 1945, pp. 1-2.

CHAPTER VI

THE LABOR UNIONS' WARTIME ACTIVITIES

At the beginning of 1944 transport ships carrying troops and munitions in growing numbers left Atlantic ports for Great Britain. Millions of Americans were under arms, many, in cooperation with the armies of the United Nations, soon to join battle against the fascists in Europe. In his 1943 Christmas message to the American people, the President said that of the more than 10 million men in the US armed forces 3,800,000 were overseas and that by the summer of 1944 their number would exceed 5,000,000.¹

The core of the US armed forces was made up of workers. Among them, organized workers alone numbered 3,250,000, of which 1,500,000 were from the AFL, 1,250,000 from the CIO and 500,000 from independent unions.² This great body of mobilized union members included 250,000 from the United Auto Workers,³ 200,000 from the United Steelworkers of America,⁴ 130,000 (250,000 by the end of 1944) from the United Mine Workers,⁵ and 110,000 from the United Electrical Workers.⁶ By April 1944, over 25,000 members of the Textile Workers Union (AFL) were in the armed forces.⁷ The Fur and

¹ *The New York Times*, December 25, 1943.

² *Labor Fact Book* 7, p. 86.

³ *Daily Worker*, October 7, 1943.

⁴ *Proceedings of the Second Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America*, p. 27; *Daily Worker*, October 7, 1943; *Steel Labor*, March 26, 1943.

⁵ *United Mine Workers Journal*, October 15, 1944, p. 15; December 15, 1944, p. 7.

⁶ *The CIO News*, September 20, 1943.

⁷ *Textile Worker*, April 1944.

Leather Workers Union had 15,000 of its members in uniform,¹ and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union gave 8,000 of its members to the US Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Merchant Marine.² There were 15,000 Communists in the armed forces, more than half of them members of the party's New York state organization.³

The final stage of the war was approaching. The decisive blow to the fascist war machine was dealt by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union's prestige had grown immeasurably. The United States and Great Britain were compelled by the events on the Eastern Front to finally fulfil their Allied duty and begin military operations in Western Europe. The power elite in the United States and Britain did not want Germany liberated by the Soviet forces, which were now capable of finishing off Hitler without Allied help. Roosevelt and Churchill gave the go-ahead for crossing the English Channel.

On June 6, 1944, the world learned of the successful invasion of Europe by Anglo-American and Canadian forces on 4,000 transport ships and men-of-war, not counting several thousand smaller craft, under an air cover of 11,000 airplanes. The second front was opened at last. American workers hailed this news. The fifth war bond drive was launched at all places of work, large and small.

A noticeable shift took place in the thinking of Americans fighting on the war fronts. Numerous letters sent home bore witness to this. Ordinary Americans wrote of their hatred of the fascists and sincere feelings for the Allies. Their common goal drew Soviet and American soldiers closer together, and many among them exchanged letters. American workers also sent many letters to the Soviet Union. The labor unions responded to the call of the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship. A committee was formed to lead a campaign of solidarity with the Soviet Union. Well-known public and trade union figures and even some industrialists took part in it; among them were Wendell Willkie, Eleanor Roosevelt, Thomas Lamont, the head of the banking house of Morgan,

¹ Philip S. Foner, *Op. cit.*, p. 612.

² *Proceedings of the Fifth Biennial Convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union*, p. 9.

³ William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, p. 421.

Philip Murray and A. Whitney. Two thousand local Russian War Relief Committees joined this mass campaign.

Cooperation between Soviet and American workers was being forged in military actions on the fronts and in the struggle for greater productivity at home. US labor unions, especially the CIO unions, exchanged delegations with Soviet trade unions. Meetings with CIO representatives took place in Moscow, London, Paris and New York. Step by step the foundations were being laid for the future World Federation of Trade Unions. The CIO played a prominent role in the work involved in creating the WFTU; its members showed themselves to be sincere advocates of international solidarity. Philip Murray, Sidney Hillman, Walter Reuther, Harry Bridges, Albert Fitzgerald, Julius Emspak, Ben Gold, R. J. Thomas, Joseph Curran, and Emil Rieve were among those who contributed much to this effort. Sidney Hillman, who was particularly active, became one of its vice-presidents.

As mentioned earlier, Green and other top leaders of the AFL held the view that any cooperation with Soviet trade unions was tantamount to "aiding and abetting communism in the United States". But not only were they opposed to cooperation with the Soviet working class and its trade unions but they were also against unity with the CIO, even during the war when the task of uniting labor's forces for the anti-fascist struggle was of utmost importance.

It may be recalled that after Pearl Harbor, AFL and CIO actions were coordinated by a Combined Labor War Board, created in February 1942. Since not only the working class but the nation as a whole had a stake in this kind of coordination, Green had to yield to outside pressure. However, in the spring of 1943, the AFL leadership turned thumbs down on joint actions with the CIO. At the end of March, the Board was dissolved, and the decision was ratified by the 63rd AFL convention in the autumn of 1943.

Many letters came into Green's office at the time expressing disagreement with the leadership's position. One such letter was sent to Green on March 20, 1944 by E. Paskell, J. O'Malley, J. Parker, W. J. Barrow, and A. J. Biggins, members of the Political Action Committee of Typographical Union No. 53 in Cleveland, Ohio. The letter noted that collaboration with the

CIO had reached large proportions and produced good results. It stressed that under the given circumstances unity of action was the best way for the working class to protect its interests. "We hope to continue such activity, and think it is only right and proper that we urge other unions to join us in this most worthy cause. We believe in this way we can best maintain the prestige, the traditions and the vital principles and policies of the American Federation of Labor."¹

In another letter to Green, Robert Sinclair, secretary-treasurer of the Vermont State Federation of Labor, pointed to the need "to get behind the right men for our State and National elections, and elect our friends and defeat our enemies. This can only be accomplished if we combine the efforts of the three labor organizations in Vermont, namely American Federation of Labor, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods."²

William Green responded: "I cannot accept the reasons offered in your letter dated April 14th as valid reasons for collaborating with the CIO. This organization is raiding our unions everywhere. How can any branch of the American Federation of Labor collaborate with an organization whose avowed purpose is the destruction of the American Federation of Labor...." He said further that to collaborate with the CIO "would mean to give it a recognition which as a dual organization cannot be extended to it by the American Federation of Labor". In an effort to impose his will upon local organizations. Green wrote that "your own American Federation of Labor organization should shape and formulate its own political policy, free from collaboration with the CIO."

"It was the decision of the Executive Council that State Federations of Labor and Central Labor Unions should cease and desist from collaborating with the CIO.... We hope and trust the Vermont State Federation of Labor will carry out the instructions of the Executive Council and conform to its decision."³

¹ WSHS Library, W.Green Papers, Box No. 26, Folder 1939-1944, E. Paskell, J. O'Malley, J. Parker, W. J. Barrow, A. J. Biggins to W. Green, March 20, 1944.

² *Ibid.*, R. Sinclair to W. Green, April 14, 1944.

³ *Ibid.*, W. Green to Robert Sinclair, April 24, 1944.

Even such a conservative AFL leader as Matthew Woll was unhappy with the AFL refusal to take part in the upcoming national conference of industry, finance, business and labor. The reason for the refusal was that AFL representatives would have to participate on an equal footing with the CIO. In a letter dated October 3, 1944, Woll underscored the folly of Green's decision, noting that 23 other organizations would take part in the conference and that the CIO could only gain from the position taken by the AFL.¹ In his reply to Woll, Green said: "The reports which reach me every day of the raiding tactics and policy of the CIO convince me clearly that they are fighting for supremacy and for the destruction of the American Federation of Labor."² Obsessed with animosity to the CIO Green was ready to accept any proposal so long as it did not involve joint actions with this "insurgent" organization. The above letters showed Green as an irreconcilable foe of the CIO and a man with no interest in labor unity. But there was more to it than the position taken by one man. Green was only one of many in the big clique of the Federation's officialdom who adhered to this hostile line.

Concentrating their efforts on the struggle against fascism, unions connected with the war industry took an active part in solving problems of increasing arms production, improving quality, transporting troops, munitions and food, and so forth. American merchant seamen, for example, made a big contribution. On the eve of the war, the National Maritime Union (CIO) was relatively small and weak and had to fight long and hard with the shipowners for recognition. But now, during the war, it was a strong organization with over 100,000 members working on troop transports, fuel tankers and supply ships.

American and Soviet merchant seamen provided a remarkable example of wartime cooperation. In a letter of greetings to the National Maritime Union (CIO), the Central Committee of the Soviet seamen's union said: "During the war with fascist Germany the merchant seamen of America and the Soviet Union selflessly carried out their wartime duty in transporting arms and foodstuffs. They often fought side by side against

¹ *Ibid.*, Matthew Woll to W. Green, October 3, 1944.

² *Ibid.*, W. Green to Matthew Woll, October 11, 1944.

enemy planes, submarines and destroyers. More than 5,000 seamen gave their lives in those years. The friendship between the seamen of the USA and the USSR has been tempered in battles."¹

Not only men but also American women-workers contributed greatly to the defeat of the enemy. Millions of women went to work in industry. American workers, both men and women, contributed to the American Red Cross and bought war savings bonds.

While the country was at war, American workers of Slavic, Italian, French, and Spanish descent manifested strong internationalist sentiments. Many Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Polish, Bulgarian, Czech and Slovak workers joined the US Armed Forces, organized and participated in mass movements to give support and material aid to the countries fighting against fascism, and joined the movement for opening the second front.

The International Workers Order, a large insurance organization with 160,000 members during the war, was well known among working people. Although the Order was a mutual-assistance and not a political organization, it was a democratic, anti-fascist association and played a big role in rallying Americans for the cause of rendering aid to the nations fighting fascism.

Functioning within the IWO structure were many sections organized along nationality lines. The New York-based Russian-American section, with over 16,000 members, was very active. The IWO's fund grew from \$81,018 in 1930 to \$1,887,678 in 1943. Benefits paid out over those years grew from \$10,720 to \$903,000.² The Order served the interests of its members, who retained an attachment to the land of their fathers. The activity of the Order among foreign-born Americans has not received much attention from historians, but what little is known shows that it made a noticeable contribution to the American struggle against fascism.

Thus, the labor unions and numerous ethnic organizations of workers like the IWO, for example, played an important

¹ AUCCTU Central Archive, Moscow.

² *Русский голос*, March 4, 1944.

role in mobilizing the efforts of the American working class for the struggle against fascism and strengthening the wartime cooperation between the American and Soviet peoples. A newspaper published by Americans of Russian origin wrote: "If asked, what have you done for victory, everyone will be able to mention his contributions with pride: I served in the armed forces; I gave blood and purchased savings bonds; I contributed to aid to the USSR and the United Nations; I supported our Commander-in-Chief, President Roosevelt, and worked for his re-election to a fourth term."¹

The 1944 wartime elections were important from both the political and the military standpoints. The labor unions were deeply concerned with their outcome. As before, organized workers predominantly supported Roosevelt and the Democratic Party.

On July 7, 1943, the executive board of the CIO formed a Political Action Committee (PAC), composed of leaders of major CIO unions: Sidney Hillman (chairman), R. J. Thomas, Sherman Dalrymple, Albert J. Fitzgerald, Emil Rieve, John Green, David J. McDonald and Van A. Bittner. The committee functioned much the same as the Labor's Non-Partisan League, and its aim was to turn the CIO into an auxiliary of the Democratic Party in its campaign among the electorate. In a letter to Roosevelt, Hillman wrote: "As you have perhaps noted from the press, the Executive Board of the CIO has established a committee for political action, of which I am the chairman. It is the purpose of this committee to unite the forces of labor and mobilize them for active and effective participation in the political campaigns of 1943 and 1944. The core of our program is unity for the election of those candidates, regardless of party affiliation, who have given you consistent and unequivocal support on all major issues, domestic and foreign."²

Hillman assured the President that 14 million organized workers, together with farmer, consumer and other progres-

¹ *Ibid.*, May 9, 1944.

² Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, Department of Research, Sidney Hillman Papers, Folder "White House 1942-1946", July 27, 1943, S. Hillman to the President.

sive groups, would support his political program of struggle for victory and progress.

AFL and CIO unions were still opposed to the creation of Farmer-Labor parties. By 1944, the few such organizations left over from the movement in the 1930s had ceased to exist. The last of these, in the state of Minnesota, merged with the Democratic Party in early 1944. The labor unions did not put up their own candidates. They were content with Democratic nominees.

The Republican Party held its convention in June 1944, in Chicago. Governor Thomas Dewey of New York, and Governor John Bricker of Ohio became the Republican presidential and vice-presidential candidates. In their election platform the Republicans promised to pursue the war in cooperation with the United Nations to final and total victory. The convention showed dissatisfaction over the government's increased role in industry, and came out for abolition of government ownership of major war plants. It also pointed out, perforce, the danger of growing unemployment after the war when war production would be curtailed.

On July 13, Roosevelt agreed to run for a fourth term, and on July 19 the Democratic convention nominated him for president, choosing Senator Harry S. Truman of Missouri as his running mate.

The Democrats also received support from the American Labor Party of New York. Since its foundation in 1936 the latter became increasingly influential in the state and played a positive role both on the eve of and during the war. However, by the end of the war, its progressive wing was locked in struggle with David Dubinsky's right-wing group of conservatives which eventually managed to seize the reins of the party.

As mentioned earlier, the ALP relied mainly on the CIO unions in the city and state of New York that were group members of the party. But in 1940, Dubinsky pulled his union out of the CIO and into the AFL, where there were strong pro-Republican sentiments promoted by such leaders as Hutcheson, Woll and Lewis, the latter having returned to the AFL for a time. Therefore, Dewey enjoyed a certain amount of union support. Dubinsky's return to the AFL was interpreted by the Republicans as a possible change of political heart.

In January 1944, Hillman proposed that all labor unions in the state of New York be allowed to join the ALP and that their representation in the party leadership be proportional to their membership rolls.

Dubinsky and his supporters rejected this on the pretext that it would lead to a "communist take-over" of the ALP. Hillman called this a stupid and groundless argument. There were over a million CIO union members in the state at the time, including steelworkers, textile workers, retail sales clerks and clothing workers. Hillman pointed out that there were no grounds for stating that these unions were communist-controlled. Those who favored expanding the party and giving it a more democratic leadership proved to be stronger than Dubinsky's group. The unions became involved in vigorous preparations to elect a new ALP leadership.

On March 28, 1944, primary elections were held in 150 electoral districts of the state. Of the 750 delegates elected to the ALP convention, 625 supported the democratization and renewal of the party leadership. Taking part in the voting were 100,000 of the total of 196,000 persons registered to vote in the primaries. A new ALP committee met in April and elected Hillman to head the party. Thus Hillman was now leader of both the CIO Political Action Committee and the ALP. The concerted actions of these organizations helped strengthen Roosevelt's position in the state and in New York City.

Vito Marcantonio, a member of the House of Representatives from the state of New York and supporter of Roosevelt's New Deal, enjoyed considerable influence in the ALP. His voice was often heard ringing out in defense of democracy in the House of Representatives, at meetings in New York, and in organizations of the American Labor Party. He carried on a lively correspondence with government and labor officials and constituents from the ranks of labor. Working people considered him a bold fighter, an impassioned speaker, and staunch defender of their rights and interests. In speeches both inside and outside Congress he exposed the plans and actions of reaction. Marcantonio was highly respected by organized labor. In 1944, he was nominated for re-election to the House of Representatives.

In the meantime, the Republicans planned a number of

anti-Roosevelt strategies in Congress, and these included attacks on the CIO Political Action Committee. Roosevelt's foes raised a row about how the PAC was a bed of communist agents and its chairman was, if not a Communist, surely a Socialist, and maybe even an "agent of Moscow". To expand its election campaign and ward off Republican attacks against it, the CIO Political Action Committee decided at a conference on June 18 to establish a National Civil Political Action Committee (NCPAC), which would include, besides union representatives, prominent progressives outside the ranks of organized labor.

On July 15, eighty leading liberals joined union officials to form a broadly representative body. George W. Norris (Dem., Nebraska), co-author of the Norris-LaGuardia Act, was elected honorary chairman, and Sidney Hillman, chairman. The labor unions were represented by A. F. Whitney, Albert Fitzgerald, Philip Murray, R. J. Thomas, James Carey, Joseph Curran, Sherman Dalrymple, Emil Rieve, John Green, and Van Bittner. Among the other Committee members were representatives of the liberal bourgeois press, including Freda Kirchwey, editor of the *Nation* magazine, and also James Patton, director of the National Farmers Union, Leo Krzycki, president of the American Slav Congress, and former governors of Minnesota and Pennsylvania Elmer Benson and Gifford Pinchot.

The Committee also included representatives of certain liberal business circles, Charles McGill, president of the McGill Manufacturing Company, for example.

Politically, the NCPAC adhered to the basic propositions of the Democratic Party. Its function was to combine the efforts of labor and other sections of the public to re-elect Roosevelt. The Committee subordinated all its actions to strengthening national unity and achieving complete victory over Germany and Japan.

The CIO Political Action Committee was not eclipsed by the NCPAC. Being a member of the NCPAC, it could now take part in fund-raising drives to support Roosevelt and its favored candidates to Congress.¹

¹ Under the Smith-Connally Act of 1943, labor unions, the Political Action Committee included, were denied the right to collect and expend money for election campaigns.

Progressive forces within the labor unions renewed the struggle for broader voting privileges. To include millions of Negroes in the ranks of voters it was necessary to abolish the humiliating poll tax in the South. The Geyer anti-poll tax bill had been introduced in Congress back in 1940, and the labor unions, primarily the CIO, supported it. A drive was launched to collect signatures demanding the repeal of poll tax laws. In September 1942, the House of Representatives began debate on the bill, and passed it on October 16. The Senate, however, defeated it on November 26.

The labor unions tried to put pressure on Congress, and in this, Vito Marcantonio became their spokesman. In January 1943, he introduced a new bill to outlaw the poll tax.

A National Committee for the Repeal of Poll Tax was organized in Washington. It included Eleanor Roosevelt, Vito Marcantonio, A. F. Whitney, Philip Murray and William Green. Labor, especially the CIO unions, where anti-racist feelings were very strong, played an active role in the Committee's work. The AFL leaders refrained from active participation in the protest campaign.

On May 24, 1943, the House of Representatives passed the Marcantonio bill by a vote of 265 to 105. The bill then went to the Senate judiciary committee, where it was discussed until November 12, 1943, but it was brought before the Senate for debate only a year later. Despite a stubborn struggle for its passage waged by a group of liberal senators led by James M. Mead (Dem., New York), the bill was defeated on May 15, 1944, by a vote of 44 to 36.¹

Negroes in the South, including industrial workers, continued to pay the poll tax or, more often, denied themselves the right to vote. As the *Catholic Worker* noted, six million poor whites and four million poor Blacks in eight Southern states could not pay the poll tax, which deprived them of the right to take part in elections or juries.²

Another bill that failed to pass was the Lucas-Green bill, which would have granted the right to vote to over ten million servicemen. Legal experts opposing the bill maintained that servicemen should remain outside of politics and therefore

¹ CR, May 15, 1944, p. 4470.

² *Catholic Worker*, March 1942, p. 5.

should neither vote nor run for office. The labor unions called this an infringement upon basic civil liberties.

The Senate began consideration of this bill, submitted by Scott Lucas (Illinois) and Theodore Green (Rhode Island), in 1942. The bill would grant the right to vote to servicemen in the land and naval forces and also to merchant seamen stationed abroad or at sea.¹ After lengthy debate, the bill was shelved until January 1944.

Roosevelt's opponents realized what it would mean to grant voting privileges to more than ten million Americans in uniform. Therefore they did everything possible to defeat the Lucas-Green bill. Not accidentally, a new one soon appeared, the Eastland-Rankin bill, which would leave it up to the states themselves to decide the question. The opponents of the Lucas-Green bill were banking on the conservatism of state authorities.

In his State of the Union Message of January 26, 1944, Roosevelt urged Congress to pass the Lucas-Green bill. He also noted that as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces he was expressing the resentment felt by servicemen because of the discrimination practised against them. In response to this, Republican Senator Robert Taft stated that the President's message was an affront to the members of Congress, and did not fail to add that pressure in favor of passing the Lucas-Green bill came from Communists and liberals.

After lengthy debates and obstruction, the Lucas-Green bill was defeated.

Although a considerable part of the citizenry was deprived of the right to participate in the elections, Roosevelt nonetheless had more supporters than Dewey. On November 7, 1944, Roosevelt and most other Democratic candidates won. Over 48 million votes were cast. Roosevelt received 25.6 million popular votes and 432 electoral votes, carrying 36 states. Dewey received 22 million popular votes and 99 electoral votes, winning a majority in only 12 states.² The American Labor Party achieved considerable success in the state of New York, where nearly half a million votes were cast for its candidates.

¹ *CR*, January 11, 1944, p. 28.

² *Labor Fact Book* 7, p. 85.

As a result of the 1944 elections, Roosevelt became President for a fourth term, and Truman became Vice-President. The Democrats won 242 seats in the House of Representatives, a gain of 20, while the Republicans won only 190, which was 19 less than they held in the preceding Congress. In the Senate, where one-third of the members were up for election, the Democratic majority remained about the same: 56 to 38.¹

On February 6, 1945, the World Trade Union Conference, representing 60 million organized workers from 40 countries, began its work in London. It was organized by a Preparatory Committee which included representatives of Soviet, American and British trade unions. One of the main points on the agenda concerned the principles of the contemplated new international trade union organization. This became the subject of heated debate. It brought out two differing points of view, reflecting the two trends in the international labor movement, the conservative and the progressive.

The reformists, headed by leaders of the British TUC, sought to revive the Amsterdam International. To be sure, they were willing to have it reorganized somewhat, taking into account the changed situation. The progressive forces, expressing the interests of the bulk of the working people, sought to create an entirely new association, fundamentally different from the Amsterdam International. They felt that the working class needed a genuinely international, mass organization that would unite working people regardless of their political views, nationality, race or religion.

The position of the CIO delegation at the London Conference was not very consistent due to a number of factors, mainly the struggle between progressive and conservative elements within the CIO itself. On the whole, the CIO's policies during the war were determined by the progressive forces, but this did not mean that the conservatives were without influence in certain questions. The CIO delegation to London included men like Sidney Hillman, who at that period advocated cooperation with Soviet trade unions, and others like James Carey, with strong anti-communist views. On some issues they

¹ Анатолий Громыко, *Конгресс США*, Moscow, 1957, p. 84.

took a united stand. The entire CIO delegation, for instance, unanimously rejected the British proposal to revive the Amsterdam International, inasmuch as its constitution allowed membership to only one trade union center from each country. The member from the USA, it will be recalled, was the AFL. Understandably, therefore, the CIO leaders favored the idea of creating a new organization to which they, too, would have access.

But there was no such unanimity among the CIO delegates regarding the character and tasks of this new organization.



Sidney Hillman, President of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Vice-President of the CIO and Vice-President of the WFTU

The rightist leaders of the CIO were not interested in a really militant and powerful democratic organization in which the reformists would not be predominant. Here the views of the rightist CIO leaders coincided with those of the TUC leaders. Both, for example, were concerned about the balance of forces in the future association, and had therefore opposed the Preparatory Committee's proposal to invite to the conference trade union representatives from Eastern and Southeastern Europe, where the war had brought about conditions in which new, democratic trade unions could be established.

Despite Carey's support of the reformists, the balance of forces at the conference was clearly not in their favor. This determined

both the outcome of the conference and the nature of the resolutions adopted. The TUC leaders failed in their plan to revive the Amsterdam International, although, as Schevenels admits, both he and Citrine "made a serious attempt to convince the majority of the Conference that it was in the interest of the new world organization to make use of the 40 years experience

and of the machinery that was available through the IFTU".¹

Considering the balance of forces at the Conference and the sentiments of the rank-and-file trade union members the leaders of the TUC and the Amsterdam International felt compelled to vote along with the rest of the delegates for the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions. However, it was not only at the London Conference that a struggle was going on against the creation of a truly international and democratic labor organization.

Having refused to take part in the London Conference, the AFL leaders stepped up their anti-Communist and anti-Soviet propaganda. The *Daily Worker* pointed this out as follows: "In an obvious desire to create 'dissension' at London, Green waved the bogey of Soviet 'domination' and pictured the move as revival of the Profintern, an international trade union organization with headquarters at Moscow."²

Seeing the success of the London Conference and realizing its significance in activating the progressive forces, the AFL leaders undertook measures to counter the results of the Conference and strengthen their own positions in the labor movements of other countries. While the Conference was still in session, the AFL executive council met and worked out a detailed plan of action against the future federation. The *Daily Worker* commented: "On the very day that delegates of 50,000,000³ organized workers at London discussed plans for a new international, William Green at Miami defiantly restated AFL plans to intervene in European countries to build a disruptive, rival movement.... Green raised an alarm of 'Communist domination' in Europe's trade unions. He declared that 'it will be the task of the AFL to avert any such calamity' through 'moral and financial support' to those who meet with AFL approval."⁴

At the same meeting, Green announced that the AFL executive council had taken up the drive, then being conducted

¹ W. A. Schevenels, *Op. cit.*, p. 332.

² *Daily Worker*, February 12, 1945.

³ The participants in the London Conference actually represented 60 million workers.—*Auth.*

⁴ *Daily Worker*, February 14, 1945.

by a special Free Unions Committee headed by Matthew Woll, to set up a \$1,000,000 fund for aid to trade unions abroad. The AFL leadership hoped to use this as a bribery fund to establish ties with reactionary trade union leaders in Europe and with their support to produce a rift among progressive organizations there.

The position taken by the AFL leaders on the eve of and during the London Conference caused great discontent among the AFL rank and file. Many members of AFL local organizations had approved of the preparatory work for creating an international federation. The labor press reported that there was opposition in some AFL unions to the leadership's boycott of the Conference. For instance, District 76 of the International Association of Machinists in Buffalo passed a resolution stating that it believed "that the American Federation of Labor has, by its action of refusing to send a representative to the World Trade Union Congress, to be held in London this coming February, failed in its duty to properly represent its affiliated internationals and their members".¹ The union adopted a resolution to send its own delegate to London. Other AFL districts and locals made similar statements.

The opposition of local organizations was clearly manifested in a referendum held by the painters and decorators union in 1944. Over 300 locals, representing nearly 200,000 AFL members, voted for participation in the new international center. The union sent Courtney Ward, secretary-treasurer of the Painters District Council 6 (Cleveland, Ohio), to the London Conference as an official observer. This gave the Conference a chance to learn of the opinion of rank-and-file AFL members. A message of greetings from many AFL union officials presented by Ward to the London Conference said: "We are convinced that it is the duty of the entire American labor movement to be represented. We regret that the AFL decided for non-participation. We hope that this will be changed in the near future."²

Some AFL organizations sent greetings to the Conference.

¹ *Daily Worker*, January 4, 1945.

² *Ibid.*, February 13, 1945.

One cable said: "The formation of a new all-inclusive world trade union federation will be hailed by labor throughout the world...."

"It is, indeed, regrettable that the executive council of the AFL did not take into consideration the sentiments nor did they consult our great membership before they rejected the invitation of your historic conference. The overwhelming majority of the members of the AFL, like those of the CIO favor allied labor unity just as strongly as we support the unity of the United Nations."¹

The AFL leadership tried to impede unity and conducted its entire ideological work among rank-and-file workers in such a way as to discredit the idea of proletarian internationalism, unacceptable to the reformist labor leaders.

This propaganda was aimed at cultivating political aloofness and isolationist sentiments. This was the AFL leaders' reply as it were, to the London Conference, whose delegates were emphasizing that the international working class should have a say in the structure of the postwar world, and that the working class in each country should exert an influence on foreign policy.

After the London Conference, the AFL leaders supplemented their ideological campaign with practical work in gathering and organizing all divisive and reactionary elements in the labor movements of various countries, particularly in Europe. They worked through the Free Unions Committee and various government agencies. In 1945, one AFL figure, Irving Brown, went to work in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). His main job was to influence the ideological orientation of the working people of Europe. AFL representatives worked in close contact with the American military command. Both were interested in weakening progressive European labor organizations such as, for example, the Confédération Générale du Travail in France.

The London Conference adopted a resolution to convene a constituent Congress of World Trade Unions in Paris in September 1945. Courtney Ward upon his return from the London Conference published a report in which he said that

¹ *Ibid.*, February 12, 1945.

whatever the position of the executive council, the great majority of the AFL membership favored international cooperation, and that his organization felt the AFL leaders would be making a mistake if they did not send delegates to the Paris Congress.

Many rank-and-file AFL members applauded Ward's report. The campaign for AFL participation in a World Trade Union Federation mounted on the eve of the Paris Congress. On July 22, 1945, 40 leading officials of AFL unions held a meeting in Cleveland at which they formed a Committee for AFL participation in a World Trade Union Federation. The meeting adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved, that we assembled officials of unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, urge the coming meeting of the Executive Council to re-examine its position and take its rightful place of leadership in the organization and establishment of world trade union unity by participating in the coming Congress of World Trade Unions to take place in Paris, September, 1945, and let it further be

"Resolved, that we delegates assembled in Cleveland set up a committee and urge International unions, district and local organizations to join in our effort in combatting the organized effort of the enemies of labor unity and help to bring about the American Federation of Labor's participation in the World Trade Union movement, and be it further

"Resolved, that a delegation be constituted to appear before the officers and Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor and urge the reconsideration of our position toward the World Trade Union Conference, and be it further

"Resolved, that there be no doubt as to the position of the membership of the American Federation of Labor on the question of our becoming part of the World Trade Union movement, that a referendum be initiated either by the Executive Council or by their respective International Unions."¹

The top AFL leaders went out of their way to suppress the protest movement. They refused to allow Ward, the chairman

¹ "Resolution Adopted at the Cleveland Conference", Sunday, July 22nd, 1945. Issued by the Committee for A. F. of L. Participation in a World Trade Union Federation, New York, 1945 (a leaflet).

of the Cleveland Committee, to speak at a meeting of the executive council. Further, they expelled him from the Federation. In response, Ward said that the Committee would continue to press for AFL participation in the new world labor organisation.¹ A number of such committees arose in several other cities and states. In the spring of 1945, locals of the Metal Workers Union spoke out in favor of the AFL's participation in the new international organization. Such support made it possible for the Cleveland Committee to send its representatives Nick Lasari and Charles Collins to the Paris Congress as observers.

The Congress of World Trade Unions, at which a World Federation of Trade Unions was to be created, opened in Paris on September 25, 1945. Historic events had taken place during the seven months that separated the London and Paris conferences: German fascism and Japanese militarism had been defeated and the long-awaited peace had come.

The Paris Congress was a significant event. In the first place, the victory over Hitler Germany did not yet mean that fascism had been eradicated. Still ahead was a strenuous struggle to democratize the entire socio-political life of Europe and root out Nazism in all its manifestations. Moreover, the ruling circles sought to shift all the burdens connected with the consequences of the war onto the working people. To protect the economic interests and political rights of the working people it was necessary to consolidate labor's ranks throughout the world. That is why it was so important to have a single international working-class organization.

Attending the conference were delegates from 65 national trade union organizations representing over 67 million organized workers in 56 countries. There was a big upsurge in working-class activity throughout the world at the time, and this determined the correlation of forces at the conference. There was an even greater preponderance of progressive, democratic elements here than at the London Conference. This to a great extent hampered the undermining efforts of the reformists, but did not prevent them altogether. Not venturing to reject the idea of a World Federation of Trade

¹ See *Daily Worker*, August 16, 1945.

Unions outright, the reformist trade union figures, mainly the British, tried to get the final decision postponed. When this did not work, they changed their tactics. Debate was opened on a draft constitution drawn up by the Administrative Committee of the London Conference. The advocates of reviving the Amsterdam International wanted to make the WFTU constitution a copy of the constitution of the outworn trade union International. There was a struggle over every point, but the reformists from the British unions did not succeed in making any substantial gains. The amendments they proposed were rejected. As in London, despite vacillations, the CIO representatives on the whole sided with the delegates of the progressive unions of other countries on basic questions.

On October 3, 1945, the conference adopted the WFTU constitution and continued its work as the First Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

The American Federation of Labor was the only major trade union association that did not become part of the WFTU. But opposition to this policy by the AFL rank and file did not cease after the formal creation of the WFTU. It entered a new phase, a phase of struggle for establishing ties with the new international organization and affiliation with it. As early as December 6, 1945, a meeting was called in Manhattan by the Cleveland Committee to hear Collins' and Lasari's reports on the Paris Congress. Lasari called on AFL members to insist that the leadership heed the voice of the seven million members. On January 25, 1946, a meeting of the AFL executive council received a proposal from the Cleveland Committee to poll all members on the question of joining the WFTU. A referendum would have given a clear picture of the wishes of the AFL membership. But this is just what the leadership was afraid of most of all. True to form, it rejected the proposal, and not only refused to enter into contact with the WFTU but intensified its efforts to split its ranks.

At the price of great effort and sacrifice made by the peoples of the United Nations and above all the Soviet Union, the historic victory over fascism was won, and the international working class played a prominent role in this struggle. A direct result of the heightened political activity and awareness of the masses of working people was the consolidation of the

international working class and the creation of the World Federation of Trade Unions. The creation of the WFTU, in turn, helped strengthen international solidarity.

In the United States these wartime sentiments were shared by many members of the AFL unions as well as by those in labor unions outside the federation. Therefore it was not surprising that the attempts of the AFL conservatives to impede international labor unity met with a rebuff, so rare in the AFL, from the rank-and-file membership.

For years, bureaucratic labor leaders, pursuing their own interests, had been implanting the notion that the international affairs and relations with labor organizations of other countries should be their exclusive monopoly. Although during the war this tradition, as well as the passiveness of the rank and file in matters of foreign policy, was seriously shaken, nothing had been done to alter this state of affairs. The progressive forces could not make the leaders heed their voice. George Morris wrote in 1945: "The top leaders speak for the A.F. of L. membership simply by default; the members have not yet developed an interest in those problems to a point of even seriously examining the statements issued in their name by the William Greens and Matthew Wolls.... The meaning of international trade union unity has not yet been driven home to the millions."¹ In this sense, despite its size and scope, the labor movement in the United States lagged behind the European labor movement politically.

Toward the end of the war, the Communist Party of the United States endured severe trials in its struggle with the enemies of Marxism-Leninism. The emergence in the Party of a right-opportunist faction headed by Earl Browder was a reflection of complex processes of the class struggle in the country. The ideological crisis of 1944-1945 was similar to the crisis in the Party in the late 1920s. During the war the right-opportunist elements increased their efforts, trying to turn the Party onto the track of bourgeois reformism. Back in 1915, during World War I, Lenin observed: "The war has clearly proved that at a moment of crisis ... a sizable mass of

¹ *Political Affairs*, November 1945, pp. 1016, 1017.

opportunists, supported and often directly guided by the bourgeoisie (this is of particular importance!) go over to the latter's camp, betray socialism, damage the workers' cause, and attempt to ruin it."¹ Browder and his followers proved to be deserters of this kind. They betrayed socialism and damaged the cause of the American working class.

During the years of neutrality, the CP was subjected to harsh repression. Some of its functionaries and members active in labor unions were imprisoned on crudely trumped-up charges. Browder, too, was subjected to repression. On March 27, 1941, he was arrested and sentenced to four years in jail. After 14 months, Roosevelt ordered his release on May 16, 1942. The White House statement said that Browder's release would "have a tendency to promote national unity and allay any feeling which may exist in some minds that the unusually long sentence was by way of penalty imposed upon him because of his political views."²

After his release, Browder devoted himself to strengthening "national unity", but in a way that met only the interests of the bourgeoisie, and thereby justified the hopes of the White House. The Browderist slogan of national unity did serious damage to the CP, causing a sharp deterioration of its ideological positions. In September 1942, Browder published a pamphlet in which he developed the idea of class collaboration not only during but also after the war.

At the end of 1943, Browder began to act openly against the Communist Party. At that time, he was responsible for the demise of the Young Communist League, which had existed since 1934. In mid-October 1943, the League held a convention in New York, with 314 delegates in attendance. Under pressure from Browder, the convention decided to dissolve the youth organization. After adopting the resolution, the convention announced the creation of a new, non-partisan organization with the high-sounding name of American Youth for Democracy.

Browder went the route of Jay Lovestone, propagating the slogans of strengthening "national unity" and class collabora-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 109-10.

² *The New York Times*, May 17, 1942.

tion. This was especially obvious in his speech at Bridgeport, Connecticut, delivered on December 12, 1943.¹ There, he argued the need and feasibility of strong and lasting cooperation between the monopolies and the workers in the struggle for unity of action. At a plenary meeting of the Party's National Committee in January-February 1944, he succeeded in winning a majority of the committee members to his side. At the January 4 session he repeated the call to support the monopolies which he had made at Bridgeport, when, referring to the Anglo-Soviet coalition, he had said: "We must be prepared to give the hand of cooperation and fellowship to everyone who fights for the realization of this coalition. If J. P. Morgan supports this coalition and goes down the line for it, I as a Communist am prepared to clasp his hand on that and join with him to realize it. Class divisions or political groupings have no significance now."²

Passing off this conciliatory mish-mash as the only way to "national unity", Browder came to accept class collaboration on the basis of a program of free enterprise, that is, capitalism.

Browder and his supporters gave speeches over the radio, at meetings and rallies, and at sessions of the National Committee. They published articles in the *Daily Worker*, printed pamphlets and virtually held complete control over the Party press, which was now propagandizing capitulatory, liquidationist sentiments.

At the January 7 session Browder delivered a lengthy speech on the Teheran Conference, and on January 10, this time to a large audience in Madison Square Garden, a speech entitled "Unity for Victory, Post-War Order".³

In both speeches he outlined his capitulatory position. Announcing his abandonment of the struggle for socialism, he asserted that this was necessary because the American people were not ready for profound social changes. Repeating the thesis of the right capitalists of the 1920s alleging the progressive nature of American capitalism, Browder came to deny the need to struggle against it.

¹ *The Communist*, January 1944, pp. 3-8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³ *Daily Worker*, January 11, 1944.



William Z. Foster, Chairman
of the Communist Party USA, 1945

Browder called for an end to opposition to the two bourgeois political parties. He regarded them simply as coalitions of various political groups during election campaigns. He said that since the lines of distinction between the two leading bourgeois parties were fading, the question arose of dissolving the Communist Party in the composition of these amorphous coalitions of voters. Communists, he said, would not join either of the major parties, but at the same time

would no longer oppose them politically. He recommended that the Party change its name to reflect the role which in his view would be more in line with American political traditions. In his January 10 speech, he announced that a Party convention would be held in May 1944 with the aim of reorganizing it into a so-called American Communist Political Association.

However, many rank-and-file Communists in the Party's state organizations did not agree with Browder and his supporters. And although they were unable to get their bearings immediately in the complex situation, Browder still could not be sure of their support. Realizing that time was working against him, he hastened to impose upon the leadership and the local organizations a decision to dissolve the Marxist-Leninist Party. He was afraid of a free discussion involving Communists at the local level.

Browder proved to be a skilful politician. He picked a convenient moment for carrying out his strategy. His appar-

ently sudden maneuver stunned many Party members, giving them no chance to understand the situation and react quickly. The war against fascism was going on, and people were possessed with but one idea: victory. Browder decided to take advantage of this and acted with lightning speed. On January 11, he convinced the National Committee to send a letter, signed by him, to all state and district organizations, proposing that preparations begin for a convention to be held for the purpose of dissolving the Party and replacing it with a non-partisan association.

Finding himself almost a minority of one, William Z. Foster made a statement to the National Committee, condemning Browder's action. This was followed by another statement on February 8, in which Foster subjected Browder's position to sharp criticism and spoke with alarm about the fate of the Marxist-Leninist Party in the United States. He emphasized that it was intolerable for a Marxist to accept the reactionary theory that American imperialism was progressive, and exposed the falsehood in the Browderist interpretation of the "national unity" slogan, the basic premise of which was acknowledgement of the leading role of the bourgeoisie in socio-historical development. He severely criticized Browder's views as right-opportunist and called on Communists to unite in the struggle against non-Marxist ideas.

Foster also exposed Browder's distortion of the decisions of the Teheran Conference. He lauded the agreement reached at Teheran, stressing its great importance to the cause of destroying fascism. He strongly condemned the false thesis that the agreement had come about through compromise and was the result of a class collaboration on an international scale. Further, he categorically rejected Browder's assertions that the Teheran Conference showed that the Soviet Union was abandoning its struggle against imperialism in general, that class peace would now be established between the countries of socialism and capitalism, and that American finance capital would play a progressive role for many long years after the war.

At the February 8 session of the National Committee, most of the members sided with Browder against Foster. Many of these were prominent CIO union officials, including Ruth Young (head of the education department of the United

Electrical Workers), William McMahon (president of Local 100 of the Auto Transport Workers Union in New York), Frederick Myers (vice-president of the National Maritime Union), Lewis Merrill (president of the United Office and Professional Workers of America and member of the CIO executive board), Ben Gold (president of the Fur and Leather Workers Union and member of the CIO executive board). These and other members of the National Committee judged Foster's defense of a Marxist-Leninist party as sectarian and supported Browder's line in toto.

The situation in the party leadership was now the most serious since the crisis precipitated by the right-opportunist stance of Jay Lovestone and his supporters in 1927. Many prominent Communist trade union leaders believed Browder's arguments and supported his liquidationist proposal. Among those speaking at the plenary session, many sided with Browder out of conviction, while others were temporarily swayed because of their inadequate understanding of the complex problems in the theory and practice of the communist movement, and also as a result of the almost dictatorial behavior of Browder himself, who held a key post in the Party.

Browder and his supporters were set on dissolving the Party at the 12th convention, which opened on May 20, 1944 in New York. Four hundred delegates and over a thousand guests took part in its proceedings. As soon as the convention was opened, Earl Browder introduced a proposal to dissolve the Party, citing the decision of the National Committee of January 11 of that year. To reinforce his proposal, Browder stated that it was already approved by state and district conferences. Without realizing the full implications of Browder's anti-party actions, the participants adopted a resolution to cease the activity of the Marxist-Leninist Party and create in its stead a non-partisan American Communist Political Association. The convention concluded its work with the adoption of this anti-Marxist resolution, and the first convention of the new organization—the American Communist Political Association—was immediately declared open. At the Association convention, Browder delivered the keynote address, in which he sought to substantiate the need for dissolving the Party. In his book, *Teheran. Our Path in War and Peace*, he outlined in

more detail than in the speech his views on the country's future development and the tasks of the labor movement. The book essentially undertook a revision of Marxism-Leninism and argued in favor of abandoning the struggle against imperialism and hence capitulation before the forces of reaction.¹

The Association convention adopted the declaration and constitution of the new organization. Both documents were composed in the spirit of bourgeois democracy and right revisionism. The preamble to the constitution said that the Communist Political Association was a non-partisan organization of Americans, which, relying on the support of the working class, continued the traditions of Washington, Jefferson, Paine, Jackson and Lincoln under the conditions of a modern industrial society. It also affirmed that the Association upheld the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. As concerns Marxism, the constitution merely said that the Association adhered to its principles.

The ideological and organizational crisis in the party continued for almost a year and a half. Gradually, however, the stalwarts in its ranks developed a struggle to re-establish the party. It took a certain amount of time for the Communists to comprehend what had really happened. Party veterans, who had entered the ranks from the left wing of the Socialist movement and from large industries and had participated in the movement for many years, were speaking out in favor of voiding the decision of the 12th convention. Most of those who had supported the dissolution in haste now realized their own mistake. Considerable educational work was being done by party press organs, especially the *Daily Worker*, which had rid itself of Browderist influence.

The American Communists received a great deal of help in re-establishing their party from sister Communist parties. Important developments followed in the wake of a letter they received from the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, signed by Jacques Duclos. In April 1945, Duclos published an article in *Cahiers du communisme*, the French Party's theoretical journal, concerning the dissolution of the

¹ Earl Browder, *Teheran. Our Path in War and Peace*, New York, 1944, pp. 69, 70.

Communist Party of the USA, in which he elaborated on the points made in that letter.

On May 20, 1945, the Political Committee of the Association discussed Duclos' article, whereupon it unanimously condemned Browder's line, and adopted a resolution calling for the reconstitution of the Communist Party.¹

On May 24, in accordance with a decision of the Political Committee, Duclos' article was published in the *Daily Worker*. The article sharply criticized Browder's interpretation of the decisions of the Teheran Conference, which was the basis for his argument that it was necessary to change the course of the American Communist Party. According to Browder, Duclos wrote, Teheran marked the beginning of peaceful coexistence and collaboration between capitalism and socialism. Further, Browder felt that the internal political problems of the United States should be solved exclusively by means of reforms, and that Europe too should be rebuilt solely on the foundations of capitalism.

Duclos also subjected Browder's other anti-Marxist propositions to devastating criticism, in particular his revisionist forecast of postwar developments in the United States. American capitalism, in Browder's view, would adjust to the new conditions and develop in a spirit of cooperation with the democratic and progressively-inclined majority of the American people.

Pointing out that the dissolution of the US Communist Party contravened fundamental Marxist-Leninist principles relating to working-class parties, Duclos emphasized the importance of the struggle to reconstitute the Party, the struggle that was headed by William Foster.

The article condemned the dissolution of the Communist Party and the creation of the non-partisan political association, and exposed Browder's reliance on bourgeois democracy, in the spirit of which the Association's constitution was drawn up. Duclos stated: "The course applied under Browder's leadership ended in practice in liquidation of the independent political party of the working class in the US. Despite declarations regarding recognition of the principles of Marx-

¹ William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, p. 435.

ism, one is witnessing a notorious revision of Marxism on the part of Browder and his supporters, a revision which is expressed in the concept of a long-term class peace in the United States, of the possibility of the suppression of the class struggle in the post-war period and of establishment of harmony between labor and capital."¹ In conclusion, the article emphasized that the Communist parties of most countries, including France, did not agree with the Browderist course.

The National Bureau of the Association initiated a discussion in local organizations and the press. Basically, the discussion revolved around the Bureau's resolution of June 2, 1945, entitled "The Present Situation and Next Tasks",² William Foster's speeches and letters, and Duclos' article. The resolution consisted of two parts. The first analyzed the struggle against fascism and its results, and exposed the self-seeking conduct of American monopoly big business. It showed the role of the Communists in defeating Hitler and set forth the tasks still ahead to completely eradicate fascism. In the second part, Browder's revisionism and the opportunist errors of those who still followed him were criticized and condemned. The resolution approved the political line taken by the leadership and welcomed the letter from the French Communist Party. In the course of the discussion, the overwhelming majority of the local organizations and rank-and-file Communists came to support the resolution.

On June 18-20, 1945, a plenary session of the National Committee discussed the situation in the Association's organizations. It approved the basic line of the National Bureau's resolution, welcomed the French Communist Party's letter and agreed with the criticism it contained. Further, the session denounced the decision of the 1944 convention to dissolve the Communist Party of the USA, found Browder guilty of implanting revisionism in the Party, and adopted a resolution to hold an extraordinary convention in New York for the purpose of reconstituting the Communist Party. A convention committee was named and given the task of studying the

¹ *Daily Worker*, May 24, 1945.

² *Ibid.*, June 4, 1945.

problem of forming a new leadership. The secretariat of the committee included William Foster, Eugene Dennis and John Williamson.

At Party meetings and conferences held on the state level, the decisions of the 12th convention were voided and resolutions adopted calling for re-establishment of Party organizations.¹ The one thousand delegates to the convention of the New York state association on July 23 voted unanimously to support the National Committee resolution.

The Communist Party of the USA was reconstituted at the 13th extraordinary convention, which opened in New York on July 26, 1945. The keynote address was delivered by Foster. In presenting the National Bureau's resolution, he commented: "The Party must recover its political initiative and communist boldness—even though reactionary members of the Truman Administration, of the AFL executive council and the NAM [the National Association of Manufacturers] may not like it."² He gave a comprehensive analysis of Browder's anti-Marxist views and actions, and showed how his sabotage and the subsequent dissolution of the Party became possible. Foster emphasized the inadequate ideological level of many Party leaders who had not taken a stand against Browder's sophistic revisionism.

The convention denounced Browderism as a reactionary current in the working class, a capitulation before imperialism and a betrayal of the vital interests of the American workers, and called on all Communists to work to strengthen the Party on Marxist-Leninist principles. The 93 delegates to the convention unanimously adopted the resolution to reconstitute the Communist Party of the USA.³ They also adopted the basic principles of the new Party constitution, which was ratified later. The convention elected a 55-member National Committee, which included 16 trade union officials. A plenary session of the NC elected William Foster as Party chairman, formed an 11-member executive committee, and a Secretariat, including Foster, Dennis, Williamson and Robert Thompson.

¹ *Daily Worker*, July 25, 1945.

² *Ibid.*, July 27, 1945.

³ *Ibid.*, July 28, 1945.

In his speech at the convention, Browder tried to defend his anti-Marxist position, saying that it would be naive to think that discussion of these issues would end after the convention. However, after a decisive rebuff from the convention delegates, he declared his acceptance of the decisions of the convention.

Thus, during World War II the American Communists had to go through a hard struggle against revisionism and for the preservation of a Communist Party in the United States. Revisionism did great damage to the Party, weakening its influence in the trade unions, where workingmen were confused and ideologically disoriented by the new proposition on class collaboration and bright prospects for American capitalism. Many workers who had previously heeded the Communists came to distrust them because of the Browderist deviation. The Communists' positions in the CIO, particularly in its central leadership, were weakened.

The Party did not lose heart, however. After the war, its progressive forces continued to fight for ideological and organizational unity.

Not long before his death, the well-known progressive writer Theodore Dreiser sent a letter to the National Committee of the Communist Party asking to be accepted as a member of the Party. Explaining his request he wrote: "I have believed intensely that the common people, and first of all the workers—of the United States and of the world—are the guardians of their own destiny and the creators of their own future. I have endeavored to live by this faith, to clothe it in words and symbols, to explore its full meaning in the lives of men and women."¹

¹ *Ibid.*, December 28, 1950.



5. Theodore Dreiser

The days of Hitler's Reich were counted. The efforts of the United Nations, and above all the USSR, were bringing closer the long-awaited end of World War II.

The American working class supported all major measures of the government and Congress for achieving victory, and approved of the military and political decisions of the Teheran Conference in 1943 and the Yalta Conference in 1945.

On November 20-24, 1944, the CIO held its seventh national convention in Chicago, at which the political line of this mass working-class organization was formulated. Attending the convention were 503 delegates from 38 national and international unions and organizing committees, including delegates from 34 state labor councils, 117 city labor councils, and 103 local industrial unions. The convention adopted a resolution on "International Security and Complete Destruction of Nazism and Japanese Militarism", which said: "There can and must not be any negotiated or soft peace. With the military defeat of Nazi Germany there will arise the all-important question of guaranteeing to the people of the world that every phase of Nazism shall be wiped off the face of the earth.... The full and stern punishment of war criminals must be assured."¹ The CIO supported the demand for nothing short of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender and urged that a plan be drawn up for the postwar structure of the world.

The convention endorsed the CIO's no-strike policy in labor disputes. Despite the negative position taken by the AFL at its 63rd convention in late 1943, the CIO reaffirmed its policy of seeking unity of action. The convention addressed a call to the leadership of the AFL and the Railroad Brotherhoods for closer unity with the CIO in future election campaigns within the framework of the two-party system. One of the convention resolutions said: "The experience of this election campaign (in November 1944—*Auth.*) has fully confirmed the correctness of our decision to abstain from and discourage any move in the direction of a third party. We reaffirm that decision and reject any and all proposals for a third party."² Here, on the question

¹ *Final Proceedings of the Seventh Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, Chicago, 1944, p. 22.

² *Ibid.*, p. 210.

of a third party, the CIO convention was in full accord with the AFL.

However, while the CIO adhered to its former line toward strengthening unity of actions with the AFL, the latter was still openly hostile to the idea and declared that it did not wish to have any relations with the "splitters" from the CIO. At another point in the proceedings, the convention again demanded that the Little Steel formula be discarded.

The delegates expressed great concern over the forthcoming reconversion, that is, the transition of the economy from war to peace. The character and substance of reconversion will be discussed in the next chapter, but here it is appropriate to point out how much this problem disturbed labor as the war was drawing to a close. There were feelings of alarm over production cutbacks already begun and the resultant rise in unemployment. Expressing the sentiments of the workers, delegates spoke of the need to maintain the existing level of employment after the war, to further increase wages and improve working conditions.

In 1944-1945, the country was faced with the problem of determining the direction the economy should take. Big business, quite naturally, was interested in maintaining the wartime level of profits at any cost. The workers' objectives, however, were to maintain and raise the employment and wage levels reached during the war.

The AFL leaders were as concerned as everyone else about postwar development. As early as December 1942 Green had appointed a committee headed by Matthew Woll to draw up measures for the economy's transition from war to peace. A report of the executive council to the AFL convention in 1944 outlined the basic provisions, which included: demobilization and conversion of war production to peacetime production; measures to ensure full employment; unconditional acceptance of the free collective bargaining system; increases in the hourly wage rates; elimination of all controls in industry and agriculture; public works for the unemployed right after the war, financed by federal and state agencies.

In March 1945, President Roosevelt invited the AFL and CIO to participate in a meeting with representatives of the National Association of Manufacturers and the US Chamber of

Commerce. They discussed the coming reconversion and drew up a code of principles called the New Charter for Labor and Management. This document stipulated the need for cooperation between labor and management. The basis for this partnership was outlined in seven points listed in the concluding part. They included far-reaching promises that would guarantee business prosperity, reasonable profits, the immutability of private property and free competition, and non-interference by the government in the economy. The Charter also recognized the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively, and reaffirmed the independence and dignity of the individual.¹

It would seem that such a declaration, so bourgeois in content and demagogic in form, should have fully satisfied the representatives of business. In fact, however, the NAM representatives refused to sign this New Charter, apparently deciding to hold off until the forthcoming national conference of industry, labor and the government. The stumbling block was the point about the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively. The monopolies were more interested in depriving the unions of this powerful weapon.

Members of Congress, too, were concerned with problems of the postwar period. As early as October 13, 1943, Senator Ferguson (Republican, Michigan) sent Philip Murray a letter saying that some of his friends from the business world had discussed with him certain phases of postwar planning which he thought might be of interest to organized labor. He suggested certain fields of collaboration between organized labor, financial institutions and business management. In conclusion he offered to meet with Murray at the Pittsburgh headquarters of the United Steelworkers to discuss this question.² On October 18, Murray sent Ferguson an affirmative reply, agreeing on the importance of the question. He also advised that the CIO had already created a special Committee on Post-War Planning.³ The executive board of the CIO

¹ Philip Taft, *The A.F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger*, pp. 257-60.

² See Catholic University of America, Department of Archives and Manuscripts, Washington D. C., Philip Murray's Papers, Box 3, Folder "Circular Letters CIO 1943-1944", A. Ferguson to Ph. Murray, Oct. 13, 1943.

³ *Ibid.*, Ph. Murray to A. Ferguson, October 18, 1943.

instructed Raymond Walsh, director of the research department, to draw up a plan outlining preparations for reconversion.

Letters similar in tone to Ferguson's were sent by other members of Congress to leaders of the AFL and Railroad Brotherhoods.

Congress was becoming more and more involved in problems of reconversion. On March 29, 1944, Senator Harley Kilgore (Dem., West Virginia) introduced a bill providing for certain measures connected with the transition of the economy to a peacetime footing. It called for the creation of a Program Bureau, whose job would include maintaining the existing levels of production and employment in the post-war period. The bill provided for job placement of demobilized servicemen, and the same plus severance pay and dependents' allowances for workers thrown out of work at closed-down war plants. It proposed that the government and employers should bear the expense of retraining former servicemen and the jobless who needed new trades.

The AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods backed this bill. But while it suited the labor unions it did not meet with the goals and interests of big business and the government. Setting aside the Kilgore bill, Congress debated a number of other bills relating to reconversion that they felt were more acceptable. Following a debate on one such bill, Congress passed two laws on October 3, 1944. One of these amended the Social Security Act to provide a national program for mobilization and reconversion.¹ The other, Surplus Property Act, was to aid the reconversion from a war to a peace economy through the distribution of government surplus property.² It was on the basis of the latter act that the government undertook the selling of war plants built during the war. This is something the big business lobbyists worked hard for.

The capitalists were disturbed by the fact that the government had acquired a vast amount of property during the war in the form of war plants. The big industrialists were not averse to laying their hands on this property on advantageous terms.

¹ *CR*, November 14, 1944, p. 8154.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8163.

The war in Germany was still raging, yet the corporations were trying to speed up the liquidation of government property. They called government ownership a "dangerous experiment" leading to the "socialization" of the free society. The sale of war surpluses began essentially in late 1945, but the ideological preparation for reconversion took place during the last two years of the war as the relevant legislation was being worked out.

In the spring of 1945, the Axis powers were on the brink of utter defeat, and the American people played an active role in bringing this about.

From December 7, 1941 to August 14, 1945, the American armed forces suffered 1.1 million casualties in dead and wounded, including 407,800 killed or mortally wounded.¹

The participation of the working people of America differed in many ways from the role played by the peoples of the Soviet Union, Britain, China and the occupied countries. But the American contribution to the cause of crushing fascism was nonetheless substantial.

Although American losses were relatively small compared with those suffered by other countries, particularly the USSR (20 million), the efforts of American working men and women in the production of arms and other materials were significant. Also, they displayed solidarity with the workers of all the Allied nations. In 1941, when the US was still neutral, they campaigned for rendering aid with arms and strategic materials to the Soviet Union, Britain and China. Progressive workers took an active part in the movement for opening the second front in Europe in 1942-1943. And when the second front was finally opened, American workers in uniform fought on that front together with British and Canadian forces and shook hands with the Soviet troops on the Elbe.

On April 12, 1945, on the very eve of the Allied victory, President Roosevelt died. In a speech he had prepared shortly before his death he expressed the desire of the American people to see a world without wars. In accordance with the Constitution, Vice-President Harry Truman became President of the United States. Upon entering the White House he

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1956*, Washington, 1956, p. 237.

assured the American people that he would continue Roosevelt's political course. Later events, however, showed that the new president embarked on a different road, one fraught with danger for the cause of peace.

During the last months of the war friendly relations between the American and Soviet peoples progressed. Leaders and many rank-and-file members of American and Soviet trade unions were exchanging letters, and the AUCCTU and the CIO maintained a lively correspondence. Many unions of the two countries exchanged messages, especially on May Day and Labor Day. On May 1, 1944, the members of Local 6 of the Building Service Employees Union of Seattle, Washington, expressed confidence that the United States and the Soviet Union would continue their united efforts after victory was achieved to guarantee a prosperous world and lasting peace.¹

In a letter dated November 17, 1944, the AUCCTU greeted the delegates to the seventh CIO convention and expressed confidence in an early victory over the common enemy.² On Labor Day 1944, the AUCCTU congratulated the members of the AFL unions on the occasion of the national holiday, and added: "We are confident that the post-war years will be put to maximum use for a speedy elimination of the consequences of the war, for strengthening peace and establishing fraternal international working-class concord."³ However, Green thought along different lines and did not bother to reply.

Speaking for the CIO, Murray wrote to the AUCCTU on May 29, 1945, proposing that the two organizations exchange delegations. In July and August of that year, an AUCCTU delegation visited New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit and Philadelphia and saw many manifestations of the friendly attitude of American workers to the Soviet Union. This kind of relationship was one of the important political results of the cooperation of the two nations in the dramatic years of World War II. A CIO delegation including Carey, Haywood, Curran and Rieve paid a return visit to the Soviet Union in October, at the time when Soviet and British trade unions and CIO

¹ AUCCTU Central Archive, Moscow.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

organizations were deeply involved in creating the World Federation of Trade Unions.

On November 23, 1945, in a reply to the AUCCTU proposal that an American-Soviet Trade Union Committee be established, Murray wrote that the executive board of the CIO endorsed the proposal and had appointed a committee composed of himself, Hillman, R. J. Thomas, Fitzgerald and Lee Pressman.¹ The CIO unions responded favorably to this decision and many of them wrote to Moscow expressing their hopes for strengthening cooperation in the postwar years.

The Soviet trade unions expressed similar sentiments. A typical letter was one from the Soviet aircraft and automobile workers' unions to the delegates of a convention of their American counterparts. It said: "We hope that the friendship of the workers of the democratic countries that was born in the trying days of the war will be instrumental in further uniting the efforts of the freedom-loving peoples in postwar reconstruction."²

¹ AUCCTU Central Archive, Moscow.

² *Ibid.*

CHAPTER VII

THE POSTWAR STRIKE UPSURGE

On September 2, 1945, Japan signed the instrument of unconditional surrender. World War II ended with the long-awaited victory over fascism. To mark the great event, President Truman declared a two-day national holiday.

Radical changes took place in the world arena as a result of the war. The Soviet Union emerged from the war stronger than it had been before it. As a result of the rout of German fascism and Japanese militarism, the power of the capitalists and landowners was overthrown in several countries of Europe and powerful revolutionary and national liberation movements swept a number of Asian countries. Eventually, as a result of these developments, eleven states with a total population of over 700 million dropped out of the capitalist system. Socialism now extended beyond the bounds of one country, and the world socialist system took shape. The general crisis of capitalism at this stage manifested itself also in an even greater unevenness in the economic and political development of the capitalist countries, an exacerbation of the contradictions of imperialism, the strengthening of state-monopoly capitalism, and the growth of militarism.

It was under these conditions that reconversion took place. While the economies of most of the capitalist powers that had fought in the war were destroyed or stagnating, the economic and military potential of the United States had increased sharply.

Even before the war was over, however, there was anxiety about the difficulties facing the nation. How to avoid mass

unemployment and the social unrest it entailed was the question that occupied the minds of the country's economists and leading statesmen. The spectre of unemployment loomed large. According to official data from the War Mobilization and Reconversion Board, the total number of unemployed rose from 840,000 in 1944 to 2,270,000 in 1946.¹

Despite the fact that the wartime boom, in a country untouched by destructive effects of war, continued into the postwar years, the economic development of the United States at the war's end was marked by instability. We mentioned earlier that there was a business slump in 1944-1945. The industrial production index in 1946 was much lower than in 1943, as can be seen from the following figures (1957-1959=100)²:

1943	1944	1945	1946
82.9	81.7	70.5	59.5

In 1946, due to the switch-over in the larger part of industry to civilian goods, overall production fell by 23.4 points as compared with the wartime peak in 1943.

One of the causes of the recession of 1944-1946 was the sharp reduction in government defense spending. In 1945, military expenditures amounted to \$90.5 billion; they were reduced to \$44 billion in 1946.³ Another cause, as mentioned above, was the transfer of industry to peacetime production, and this meant that some plants were closed down altogether, while others were temporarily shut down for retooling.

During the war the demand for consumer goods had risen sharply and remained largely unsatisfied. Housing construction and the production of passenger cars, refrigerators, radios, vacuum cleaners, washing and sewing machines and other home appliances had been reduced to a bare minimum. The switch-over to a peace economy meant the expansion of commodity production and services to meet civilian needs. This brought about a flow of capital into industries producing

¹ Труд и капитал в США. Сборник фактов, Moscow, 1949, p. 65.

² Л. Я. Берри и др., Промышленность США в 1929-1963 гг., pp. 20-21.

³ The Economic Almanac, 1956, p. 455.

the above-mentioned goods as well as into the trade and service fields. Naturally, this restructuring required large investments in private construction, which, according to the War Mobilization and Reconversion Board, was undergoing the biggest boom in its history. During 1945, new construction activity totalled about \$4.5 billion, of which \$2.6 billion was private. In 1946, new construction increased to \$7 billion, that is, a rise of almost 60 per cent, with investment in private construction amounting to \$5.5 billion.¹

Enormous outlays for capital construction were made in the trade and service fields.

In such areas as the automobile and construction industries and the manufacture of home appliances reconversion was accomplished rapidly and the monopolies quickly adapted to market demands. In other fields, largely busy with defense orders, reconversion took place more slowly, which tended to reduce overall production volume and worsen the economic position of the workers, part of whom lost their jobs.

Reconversion was accompanied by the liquidation of government ownership of defense plants and the sale of war surpluses at home and, to a large extent, abroad. By the end of 1946, almost three-fourths of the assets of 2,800 enterprises built by the government during the war became the property of 250 major monopolies that bought them at an average of 60 per cent of face value.²

With the war coming to an end and the economy entering postwar reconversion, old problems facing the workers and the labor unions took on a new urgency. What would happen to the standard of living? Would it plummet to the levels of the 1930s, or could it be held at the wartime level and be used as the starting point in the fight against big business? They were worried about the prospects of employment, hourly wage rates, weekly and annual earnings, overtime work and its compensation, work loads, speedup and other working condi-

¹ Fifth Report to the President, the Senate and the House of Representatives, by the Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion, Jan. 1, 1946, Washington, p. 28.

² В. И. Лан, США в военные и послевоенные годы (1940-1960), Moscow, 1964, pp. 189-90.

tions. To no smaller extent the workers were concerned about the cost of living.

The first years of reconversion showed that the employers were out to place the whole burden onto the backs of the workers. The big industrialists were demanding a decisive role in the postwar economy. The workers, naturally, wanted to retain the gains they had made before and during the war. A clash was inevitable.

In a message to Congress on September 5, 1945, Truman outlined the administration's program for reconversion. It called for expanded social security, raising the minimum wage from 40 to 65 cents an hour, and legislation guaranteeing full employment. It recommended that the Fair Employment Practices Committee be made into a permanent body, all forms of government control lifted, and taxes slightly reduced. In addition to this, the administration intended to do away with the excess profits tax, reduce military spending, and begin demobilization.

One of the first attempts to find ways and means to avert the sharp class conflict that was brewing was the National Labor-Management Conference which took place in Washington November 5 to 30, 1945. As early as July 30, 1945, Senator Arthur Vandenberg addressed a letter to Secretary of Labor Schwollenbach, suggesting that such a conference be held. Vandenberg wrote: "Responsible Labor Leadership knows that irresponsible strikes and subversive attacks upon essential production are the gravest threats of the permanent success of Labor's Bill of Rights. The American public knows that we cannot rebuild and maintain our national economy at the high levels ... if we cannot have productive peace instead of disruptive war on the industrial front."¹

Truman and Schwollenbach agreed with Vandenberg and sent proposals to the National Association of Manufacturers, the US Chamber of Commerce, the CIO, the AFL and independent unions. After consultations, the leaders of these organizations set up a preparatory committee to work out the conference agenda.

¹ *Proposed Agenda for the National Labor-Management Conference*, Washington, October 23, 1945, p. 2.

The industrial magnates were seeking to get a number of concessions from labor, one of which was a 30 per cent reduction of the wartime wage level. They were also thinking in terms of reviewing work loads and increasing labor productivity.

The conference was preceded by a meeting in Absecon, New Jersey, of officials of the country's major banks and companies. They worked out recommendations on measures to be taken during the reconversion period.

Soon after that meeting, Truman made note of the attempts by the monopolies to raise prices. The administration wanted to act with caution in lifting controls and to prepare the public for it.

Truman tried to portray the government as an impartial, non-class force, equally concerned about workers and the employers. He frequently delivered demagogic speeches and made statements designed to create the impression that his administration was a true friend of labor. In one such speech he said pompously: "We recognize the importance and dignity of labor and we recognize the right of every citizen to a wage which will permit him and his dependents to maintain a decent standard of living."¹

He pursued the same kind of ostensible impartiality with respect to the forthcoming national conference, emphasizing that the government would have no casting vote in it.

Truman called for class peace and urged that strikes be averted and disputes settled by peaceful means.

The conference opened on November 5, 1945, in Washington, and was attended by 39 delegates, 18 representing employers and management, 18 representing labor, and three representing the general public. The public members—Henry Wallace, Lewis Schwollenbach and Judge Walter P. Stacy—had only a consultative voice in the conference. This underscored the fact that the conference brought together two equal sides (management and labor) who by themselves, without pressure from the outside, would be able to solve their problems. Among the labor delegates eight were from the AFL, eight

¹ *American Photo Engraver*, September 1945, p. 805.

from the CIO, and one each from the United Mine Workers and the Railroad Brotherhoods.

Among the employer representatives there were David Sarnoff, Eric Johnston, Ira Mosher and other well-known figures from the business world. They took a hard line. The industrialists and the bourgeois press were hostile to attempts by Truman and Wallace to propose a partial wage increase. Some, like those in previous years who suspected Roosevelt of partiality to the CIO, accused Truman, too, of siding with the CIO and working against "orthodox democracy".

Labor was represented by the same old rightist leaders—Green, Meany, Tobin and the like. Really progressive labor union leaders as well as a number of leaders of independent labor organizations were not admitted to the conference.

There was no unity among the labor delegates. Green, in particular, came out against including the wage question on the conference agenda. He said that this should be decided without government control, and that labor should try to satisfy its demands by using its own economic power, that is, not by legislative means but by means of direct negotiations between labor and management.

The CIO delegation held a different position, and demanded that the question of raising wages definitely be taken up at the conference. Murray's argument on this issue was characteristic. He maintained that industry could increase wages by 31 per cent and still receive twice as much profit as in the prewar period.¹ Even according to very conservative estimates of the War Mobilization and Reconversion Board, industry was in a position to increase wages by 24 per cent.²

Sharp differences arose at the conference both between labor and management and between AFL and CIO leaders on the question of higher wages. The realities of the situation disproved Truman's words that labor and capital would cooperate with each other and that the conference would lay the foundations for an era of prosperity and security. It was

¹ Philip Murray, *The CIO Case. For Substantial Pay Increase*, Washington, 1945, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*

futile to expect it to propose a mechanism for settling industrial disputes.¹

The representatives of industry refused to discuss not only the demands of the unions but also the government's proposal calling for a 15 per cent wage increase without a raise in prices. The conflicting interests of the workers and the employers obviously could not lead to the "class peace" in industry which the latter wished to achieve. The conference was bound to fail, and so it did.

In view of the position taken by the delegates representing management and the atmosphere at the conference one cannot agree with the assessment of the conference's potential significance given by historian Foster Rhea Dulles. In his book on the history of the labor movement in the USA he says: "Apart from recommendations for expanding the Conciliation Service of the Department of Labor, the conference had no practical results."² But how does he explain the reasons for the failure of the conference? In his opinion, the main reason was that the unions did not understand the significance of the conference and responded to its convocation with mass strike actions. Thus, he sees the main cause to have been the behavior of the unions and the lack of restraint on the part of the workers who responded to it with strikes. Strikes, however, were taking place long before the conference convened, and it was the conference's purpose to reconcile the conflicting sides in order to avert future strikes. This did not happen, however, because it was impossible to reconcile the extreme class contradictions.

After the labor-management conference was over, the annual convention of the NAM opened in Washington in December 1945. Its participants assailed the unions and especially the CIO.

The monopolies were using the hardships of the postwar period to their own ends. They achieved a redistribution of the national income in their favor by means of lowering real wages. In 1945, when the national income amounted to \$182.8 billion,

¹ *Final Proceedings of the Eighth Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, Atlantic City, 1946.

² Foster Rhea Dulles, *Labor in America. A History*, New York, 1949, p. 358.

the share of the corporations was \$20.2 billion (before taxes) and the share of wages was \$122.9 billion; in 1946, when the national income was \$178.2 billion, the figures were \$21.1 billion and \$116.8 billion, respectively.¹ Secretary of Labor Schwollenbach conceded at the time that "figures dealing with the current distribution of the national income indicate a downward trend in labor's share, and profits in the aggregate are breaking all records".²

It was mainly the big monopolies that made the increased profits. In 1948, 0.07 per cent of all companies received over 40 per cent of all the profits. The leaders were 250 major corporations which formed the nucleus of monopoly capital in the United States. The assets of these corporations totalled \$192.8 billion.³

Using their enormous economic and political power, the monopolies pressured the administration and Congress to take measures in their interests. Besides the government-owned war plants which they bought up at low prices, the monopolies received yet another generous gift. An income tax law passed by Congress in 1945 released the corporations from the excess profits tax.

When we also consider the lowered income tax rates on corporations we can see that they derived no small benefit from these Congressional actions.

During the war, the monopolies and the private capitalists had to comply with government-imposed price and rent controls, although they did show their displeasure, calling these measures "socialization" of the economy. But as soon as the war ended, voices were raised against government interference in labor-management relations. Politicians, scholars and journalists joined in propagandizing free enterprise. They declared that material sacrifices by the people were inevitable.

Some economists justified the need to have some sort of "normal" unemployment rate. Some considered the "natural"

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1974, p. 327.

² *The Union Postal Clerk*, June 1947, p. 9.

³ *Монополии сегодня*, Moscow, 1951, p. 15.

reserve to be 2 per cent of the work force, while others maintained that it should be 5 or 6 per cent.¹ Pointing to the jobless waiting outside the plant gates, the employer could whip up his workers, speed up the assembly line, lower wages or increase the work loads. A characteristic stand was taken by Benjamin Fairless, president of the United States Steel Corporation, who categorically rejected the CIO suggestion that guaranteed annual wages be introduced. He said in a press statement that this would destroy rather than protect labor's right to work, that it would tie workers to specific jobs and thus deprive others of the right to them.

The peacetime readjustment of the US economy brought about a deterioration of the economic condition of the bulk of the American working class in the first postwar years.

According to Department of Labor statistics, employment dropped from 65 million in 1945 to 61 million in 1946. Of these, 57 million were in the economy and 3.5 million in the armed forces. The number of unemployed had increased to 2.3 million.²

The number of people employed in trade, the service field and in financial and insurance establishments grew rapidly in these years. The number of industrial workers fell by 1.8 million in the first three months after victory over Japan, while the number of workers in the trade and service industries increased by 800,000.³ A War Mobilization and Reconversion Board report noted that many laid-off war-plant workers plus many veterans returning from the war were pouring into these industries. On the other hand, the production worker category began to shrink markedly. Although the number of non-agricultural workers grew from 30.3 million in 1939 to 43 million in 1946, serious changes had taken place within the working class, as can be seen from the following data (in thousands)⁴:

¹ Florence Peterson, *Survey of Labor Economics*, New York-London, 1947, p. 117.

² *Monthly Labor Review*, July 1948, p. 51 (figures rounded—Auth.).

³ *Fifth Report to the President*.... p. 8.

⁴ *Monthly Labor Review*, January 1948, p. 82.

Table 3

Industry division	1939	1943	1946
Total estimated employment (excluding agriculture)	30,287	42,042	42,928
Manufacturing	10,078	17,381	15,348
Mining	845	917	874
Contract construction	1,150	1,567	1,644
Transportation, communication, other public utilities	2,912	3,619	4,071
Trade	6,705	7,322	9,234
Finance and insurance	1,382	1,401	1,546
Service	3,228	3,786	4,573
Government	3,987	6,049	5,638

American statistics include in the industrial work force not only wage earners, but also enterprise owners, managers and other administrative personnel. Therefore the actual number of wage earners in industry was smaller than shown in Table 3. But even so, the statistics give an idea of the correlation between production and non-production workers.

In 1946, the drop in the number of workers in the manufacturing industries was caused to a large extent by the restructuring of production, and especially by the closing down of many war plants.

The differentiation in wages shown in the preceding chapters did not become smaller after the war. Workers who left war plants to go to work in the trade and service industries took big wage cuts. But the biggest losses were caused by the reduction in the number of hours worked per year. The workweek in many cases was reduced from 48 to 40 hours, and overtime work, which was compensated at a time-and-one-half rate of pay, was as a rule eliminated. This led to a sharp reduction in weekly earnings. Some workers found their hourly wage rates reduced or their work loads increased without any increase in pay. In manufacturing, for example, the workweek was reduced from an average of 45.2 hours in 1944 to 40.4 in 1946, so that the average weekly wages declined from \$46.08 to \$43.82.¹ During this period, prices had gone up

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1951*, Washington, 1951, p. 201.

13 per cent.¹ According to the official government figures which Murray cited in his report to the eighth convention of the CIO in November 1946, 70 per cent of American families in early 1946 earned less than \$3,000 a year, and 47 per cent earned less than \$2,000 a year.²

At the same time, the cost of living was rising sharply. According to the Heller budget, the annual expenses of a family of four grew from \$3,000-\$3,500 in 1946 to \$4,111 in 1948.³

Prices were the subject of debate in the executive and legislative branches of government and in the press. The price control law was due to expire June 30, 1946, and debates began in Congress on the question of passing a new law. The business press stressed the difficulties, "It isn't going to be easy to restore anything which resembles effective price control even if Congress passes a law that suits the President."⁴

It was not surprising that with rising prices and falling wages, the condition of the American workers began to deteriorate markedly in the postwar period. If during the war there was a certain growth in the incomes of most worker families due to increased hourly wage rates, overtime work, and the earnings of second and third family members, this possibility became rare in the period of reconversion. To cover their annual budget deficit, most worker families had to draw on their wartime savings, as confirmed by the fact that savings deposits went down from \$35.6 billion in 1944 to \$11 billion in 1947.⁵

Unwilling to bear the whole burden of reconversion, the organized workers began to protest with increasing vigor. This was something the labor leaders could not ignore. The CIO leaders, for example, made wide use of material contained in a report entitled, "A National Wage Policy for 1947", compiled by Robert Nathan, former deputy head of the Reconversion Board. The report stated that a general increase in wage rates

¹ *Final Proceedings of the Eighth Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, p. 38.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Факты о положении трудящихся в США (1947-1948)*, Moscow, 1949, pp. 60-61.

⁴ *Business Week*, July 6, 1946, p. 9.

⁵ *CIO, Proceedings*, 1947, p. 60.

was essential not only in the interests of the workers. "The silent facts of the wage-price-profit situation in American business today indicate that the national interest requires a major general increase in wage rates." It emphasized that a further substantial wage increase without a general price increase was possible, justified, and essential. Nathan considered it to be fully possible for all industries to raise wages by 25 per cent without raising prices. The report also attempted to show the possibility of bringing wages back to the January 1945 level by raising them in 1946 an average of 23 per cent in all manufacturing industries, which would involve a 25.7 per cent increase in steel and a 28.4 per cent increase in the automobile industry.¹

The NAM gave Nathan's report a hostile reception. It described it as a document aimed at misleading the public as a whole and workers in particular.²

Thus, after the war, the American workers were faced with a drive by the big corporations to lower the wartime wage level, eliminate the time-and-one-half pay for overtime, and increase work loads. The workers were deeply concerned over declining employment and the threat of growing unemployment. They realized that they would have to resort to strikes, a tested weapon in the struggle to protect their standard of living.

The closing months of 1945 were marked by an intensification of the strike struggle. Masses of workers joined the struggle under the slogan, "No Contract, No Work!" In September, hundreds of thousands went out on strike in the steel, rubber, electrical and radio, oil refining and coal industries. An unemployed movement emerged and was particularly strong in Chicago, where thousands of laid-off workers were demanding reinstatement. Returned war veterans joined war workers in a huge demonstration for jobs, sponsored by the Chicago CIO Industrial Union Council. The

¹ Robert R. Nathan and Oscar Gass, *A National Wage Policy for 1947*, Washington, December 1946, pp. 12-13.

² *The Robert Nathan Report, an Appraisal of Robert R. Nathan. A National Wage Policy for 1947*, prepared by the Research Department of the National Association of Manufacturers, December 1946, Washington, 1946, pp. 2-3.

demonstrators carried posters, the most frequently seen reading: "We Want 60,000,000 Jobs."¹

In an appeal addressed to Truman, the demonstrators urged the President and Congress to apply unused war appropriations to peaceful needs and unemployment relief. In this same message, over 7,000 workers called for the passage of a full employment law, unemployment benefits of \$25 a week for 26 weeks, a 20 per cent increase in wage rates, a guaranteed annual income, and an increase in the minimum wage to 65 cents an hour. Workers in other cities set forth similar demands.

The attention of the labor unions was focussed on the mass actions of unemployed and striking workers. The struggle was intensified considerably by the automobile workers' demand for a 33-cent-an-hour wage increase, which amounted on the average to a 30 per cent rise. Most of the other unions made similar demands during strikes. The automobile companies rejected the demand and staged a lockout.

General Motors was in essence trying to provoke a strike at a time that was unfavorable to the workers, hoping to break the strike and the workers' resistance.² During negotiations with the union, some other companies agreed to raise wages by 10 cents an hour. Since a strike in the automobile industry could precipitate a crisis in the steel industry, the President intervened. The government's recommendation was that the companies raise wages by 19.5 cents an hour. The union agreed to this, but General Motors rejected the proposed compromise. Ford Motor and Chrysler proved to be more tractable and agreed in principle to the proposal. On November 21, 1945, after fruitless negotiations, about 200,000 workers at 102 General Motors plants in 50 cities of 20 states decided to strike.³ Many of them manned the picket lines against strikebreakers.

During the strike the government tried to act as arbitrator. On December 3, it asked the workers to go back to work. But since the struggle continued, Truman appointed a fact-finding

¹ *Daily Worker*, August 22, 1945.

² *Ibid.*, October 26, 1945.

³ *Ibid.*, November 22, 1945.

commission, which proposed on January 10, 1946 that the company increase wages by 19.5 cents an hour without raising its automobile prices, and that the agreement the company had abrogated during the strike be reinstated. But it was not until March 13 that the strike ended after the company agreed to increase wages on the terms proposed by the commission. Negotiations at Ford and Chrysler plants ended on almost the same terms. The General Motors strike was one of the longest in the automobile industry.

The autumn months of 1945 were full of other events as well. On October 1, 1945, a strike of 3,500 longshoremen began in the port of New York.¹ Over 200,000 miners entered into a sharp conflict with the mineowners. At the time that the National Labor-Management Conference was being held in Washington, a city transport workers' strike broke out there. In New York City there was a general strike of elevator operators and maintenance workers who serviced the city's skyscrapers. The press noted that in "Wall St., bankers puffed their way upstairs alongside their low-paid employees, and up at the big Empire State Building, every elevator was standing still".²

The greatest activity in the strike struggle that year was shown by the CIO-affiliated unions. Almost half of all striking workers were CIO members, and only 20 per cent were AFL.³ Demobilized servicemen were prominent among the strikers.

All in all, 4,750 strikes took place in 1945, involving about 3,470,000 persons.⁴ But this was only the beginning of an even greater upsurge to come in 1946. Describing the situation at the time, Eugene Dennis said at the July session of the Communist Party National Committee that during the winter of 1945-1946, the big monopolies had rejected the moderate wage demands the workers made, provoking a series of strikes, and tried to undermine the CIO unions in the auto, steel, electrical and other industries. However, due to the fighting spirit of the workers and the policies of their unions, these attacks were rebuffed and the workers won out.

¹ *Daily Worker*, October 18, 1945.

² *Ibid.*, September 25, October 2, 1945.

³ *Труд и каменар в США*, p. 128.

⁴ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, Washington, 1949, p. 222.



Steelworkers on strike, 1946

During this period, Negro workers became very active in the strike struggle, and not only in the automobile, coal and steel industries, but also in the meat-packing, textile and other industries. They took part in the movement to transform the temporary Fair Employment Practices Committee into a permanent government body. In January 1946, 600 representatives of Negro organizations led by Negro activist Benjamin Davis, a member of the National Committee of the Communist Party, marched to Washington with this aim.

Indeed, never in the history of the United States had so many workers been on strike simultaneously as in early 1946. Strikes gripped entire industries. By the end of January, the number of workers on strike was 1,500,000.

The steelworkers played a leading role in labor's economic struggle in the postwar period. In early 1946, a general strike in the steel industry attracted wide attention as it threatened to shut down many plants in other industries, especially the automobile industry, one of the biggest consumers of steel.

The conflict in steel first arose in late 1945. The steel

industry was one of the most monopolized and powerful in the country. In the postwar years, most of the country's steel was produced by eight major companies employing hundreds of thousands of workers. Two companies, United States Steel and Bethlehem Steel, owned 43.7 per cent of the country's steel-making capacities. To counteract rising prices and a declining standard of living, the workers at United States Steel demanded a wage increase. Negotiations went on for a long time without results. In an effort to avert a strike, Truman urged the corporation to raise wages by 18.5 cents an hour. The union agreed to the President's proposal, but the company rejected it. As a consequence, negotiations between Murray and company president Fairless were broken off on January 12, 1946. On the same day, Murray gave the signal for a strike.

On the night of January 13-14, Truman, acting as mediator, again intervened, and invited Fairless and Murray to the White House. He urged Fairless to accept his compromise proposal. However, Fairless reaffirmed the company's refusal. Later, in his keynote address to the eighth convention of the CIO in November 1946, Murray lauded Truman's mediatory role in the dispute.

Another steel company, Kaiser Steel Corporation, agreed to raise wages at its California plants by 18.5 cents an hour. This to a certain extent refuted the arguments of the bourgeois press and the United States Steel Corporation that it was impossible to raise wages by 18.5 cents without raising steel prices. The *American Economic Review* magazine reported that the profits of 20 steel companies before taxes amounted to \$270.6 million in 1945, and \$345.3 million in 1946. In nine steel companies, the profit on every ton of steel averaged \$3.61 in 1945 and \$5.55 in 1946.

On January 21, 1946, the strike spread to almost the entire steel industry, involving 750,000 workers in 30 states. Only after United States Steel got government's permission to raise the price of steel by \$5 a ton did it accept Truman's proposal to raise wages by 18.5 cents an hour, which amounted to an average increase of 17.5 to 20 per cent, instead of the 30 per cent demanded by the workers. It was on this basis that the dispute with United States Steel was settled on February 15,

1946. Shortly thereafter, strikes at other companies ended, and about 300,000 workers went back to work.

April 1, 1946 was the beginning of a mass strike affecting nearly half of the country's mines. For a long time, the government hesitated taking harsh measures, fearing unhappy consequences. The union was demanding the 18.5-cent-an-hour wage raise supported by the government in other industrial disputes, plus safety provisions in the mines and union control over health insurance funds. The mineowners rejected the demands, whereupon the union called a strike. The bourgeois press immediately launched a campaign against the miners. Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug declared that the strike would cause drastic curtailment of industrial activity and that "the relief program for Europe is on the verge of collapse".¹ The NAM warned that New York would find itself in a critical situation, and northern Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Indiana were already experiencing a coal famine.²

The press repeatedly carried threats against the miners and their union. On May 17, the miners and the mineowners rejected Truman's offer to mediate. On May 22, the President announced that Secretary of the Interior Krug would take over and operate the mines under a presidential order establishing government control over the mines.³

The miners' union condemned Truman's anti-labor policy. A report to the 39th convention of the United Mine Workers said: "On Saturday May 25, 1946, President Truman appeared before a joint session of the House and Senate, demanding immediate passage of legislation to curb strikes. A bill drawn by Presidential advisers containing the most drastic measures ever proposed by any President was offered to the Congress.... In violation of the fundamental and constitutional rights of every workingman and woman in America, the President asked that he be given power to draft every worker striking against government-seized properties into the Army where they would be forced to work at the point of a bayonet."⁴

¹ *New York Herald Tribune*, May 4, 1946.

² *Ibid.*, May 9, 1946.

³ *Ibid.*, May 22, 1946.

⁴ *United Mine Workers Journal*, November 15, 1946, p. 12.

On May 25 the government seized the coal industry, forcing the union to halt the strike. On May 29, the miners returned to work after the companies agreed to satisfy their demands. Wages were raised by 18.5 cents an hour, which meant that the dispute was settled on the terms recommended by the government. The miners won an increase from \$75 to \$100 in benefits for unused vacation and the creation of a welfare fund to which employers would contribute 5 cents on each ton of coal mined.¹ The initial size of this fund was \$26 million.² However, the miners' demands were not fully satisfied, and in late 1946 the dispute flared up again. The union declared invalid the May contract made under government pressure. The government, still in control of the mines, would not agree to new union demands, and continued to uphold the court injunction against the miners (in accordance with the Smith-Connally Act). Under these circumstances, Lewis called upon the workers to strike, and on November 20, 1946 they refused to go down into the mines. The district court charged the union with contempt of court. The case was heard in a charged atmosphere and ended in a decision which imposed a fine of \$3,500,000 on the union, and a separate fine of \$10,000 on the union's president, John L. Lewis.³

On December 7, under conditions of persecution and baiting, Lewis called the miners back to work, promising them that he would continue to negotiate for a new contract. The union appealed to the Supreme Court, which upheld the lower court's decision but reduced the fine to \$700,000.⁴ Government control of the mines was lifted only in June 1947.⁵

Another instance of heavy-handed government interference occurred during a strike on the railroads. The railroad workers were an important part of the American working class. United in the Railroad Brotherhoods, they had little contact with organized workers in other branches of the economy. The specific features of their work set them apart, and the top union officials did everything they could to perpetuate this

¹ *Труд и капитал в США*, p. 135.

² *U.S. News & World Report*, October 7, 1949, p. 14.

³ *United Mine Workers Journal*, December 15, 1946, p. 3.

⁴ Henry Pelling, *American Labor*, Chicago, 1960, p. 188.

⁵ *Ibid.*

isolation. Their labor policy amounted to keeping the unions out of politics. To avoid sharp conflicts and come to terms with the companies, the Brotherhood leaders were usually ready to go back on all principles.

The year 1946 marked the end of a twenty-year period of "peace" that had begun with the passage of the Watson-Parker Act in 1926. Not a single strike had taken place on the railroads in those 20 years. All disputes were settled with active intervention by the government, which acted as mediator to avert strikes.

In the meantime, the economic position of the railroad workers deteriorated. Unemployment became a steady factor. In 1920, two million people were employed on the railroads, but on the eve of World War II the figure stood at one million. Even during the war years, their number did not exceed 1.5 million, although in 1944 the ton-mileage had doubled over the 1940 level and passenger transportation had quadrupled,¹ which indicated a further intensification of labor.

Now that the war was over and the Railroad Brotherhoods were free from the no-strike pledge, the workers decided to stand up to the monopolies. They also came out against government interference in their labor disputes.

The threat of a general strike was imminent. This was felt by the tone of the bourgeois press, which increased its attacks on the railroad workers for making what it called excessive demands on the companies. As usual, the press brought up the 1926 law and so much as told the Brotherhoods that they should not violate their "fine traditions" but content themselves with arbitration. One New York newspaper reported: "The impending strike affects 250,000 railroad trainmen and locomotive engineers, who are demanding a wage increase of \$2.50 a day and forty-seven changes in operating rules."²

It goes without saying that the companies and the government took every measure to prevent the strike. Mediation boards were set up, lengthy negotiations were held, and so forth. Then the dispute was turned over to an arbitration board, which decided that the workers should get a 16-cent-an-

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1946, p. 753.

² *New York Herald Tribune*, May 15, 1946.

hour wage increase instead of the 30 cents they were demanding.¹ Truman agreed with the board's decision and called representatives of both sides to the White House for talks.

Truman declared at his press conference that he would order seizure of the railroads to prevent a nationwide strike, if railroad management and union representatives reported to him the next day that no settlement was possible by negotiation.² On May 17, twenty-four hours before the strike was to begin, the railroads were seized by federal troops.

Even so, a general strike of railroad workers began on May 23, under the leadership of the Brotherhoods of Locomotive Engineers and Railroad Trainmen, headed by Alvanley Johnston and Alexander F. Whitney. It involved 250,000 locomotive engineers and trainmen. For the first time in twenty years the Railroad Brotherhoods asserted their rights and refused to submit to the conciliatory law of 1926. Almost all railroad traffic in the United States was halted.³ On May 24, of the usual 17,500 passenger trains, only 50 were operating.

The bourgeois press published panicky reports. Some New York papers wrote with alarm that if the industrial paralysis caused by the railroad and coal strikes were not ended it would be a disaster for everyone, and that every hour and every minute was precious in the effort to end the strikes. On May 24, Truman delivered a radio address to the nation. While accusing the union leaders of every sin, he assured the railroad workers that he was their friend. However, this did not prevent him from delivering an ultimatum to the railroad workers and putting the railroads under government control. He ordered the army to take over the railroads. The railroad workers were compelled to end the strike.

Speaking before a joint session of Congress on May 25, 1946, Truman described the railroad strike as one against the government and asked for legislation providing that all workers striking against the government be drafted into the

¹ *New York Herald Tribune*, May 14, 1946.

² *Ibid.*, May 17, 1946.

³ *Ibid.*, May 24, 1946.

army and that employers and union officers who ignored the President's back-to-work orders be prosecuted.

However, the House and Senate could not agree on the question. After a forty-minute debate, the House overwhelmingly approved a bill giving the President emergency powers. But the bill was defeated in the Senate.

Government intervention and persecution forced the Railroad Brotherhoods to terminate the strike on May 26. The workers and a number of union leaders attacked the pro-monopoly position of the government and the President. In a press statement, Whitney condemned Truman's actions and promised that his Brotherhood would use its treasury to "defeat Mr. Truman if he tries again to run for President in 1948".¹ Michael Quill, president of the CIO Transport Workers Union, said that Truman had become strikebreaker No. 1 in the interests of American bankers and railroad companies.

In contrast to the railroad workers, the maritime workers and longshoremen displayed militant spirit and determination in the struggle against the monopolies.

A prominent role in the strike struggle was played by the maritime workers and longshoremen. After the end of the war, the shipowners decided to review the wartime wage scales for merchant seamen and stevedores, and undertook efforts to nullify the higher standard of living the workers had achieved. Premium pay for war-risk duty and overtime pay were stopped, and work conditions and norms were re-examined. This naturally led to unrest among the maritime workers. Their unions spoke out against the anti-labor policies of the shipowners. Seamen picketed the local offices of the War Shipping Administration.

To strengthen their forces the CIO unions of merchant seamen and other workers involved in servicing the merchant fleet on the Pacific Coast organized a Committee for Maritime Unity, composed of representatives of the Maritime Union, the Longshoremen and Warehousemen, the Radio Operators, and

¹ *Ibid.*, May 27, 1946.

the Marine Cooks and Stewards.¹ The Committee directed preparations for a strike involving over 200,000 West Coast maritime workers. In negotiations with the shipowners, they demanded a 22- to 30-cent-an-hour wage increase, a 48-hour week, and \$1.25 to \$1.75 an hour for overtime work.

However, the West Coast seamen and longshoremen got no support from the leadership of the East Coast maritime workers' and longshoremen's unions affiliated with the AFL. On the contrary, their executive committee launched attacks against the West Coast Unity Committee. Moreover, Green, Meany and Ryan entered into negotiations with the Atlantic Coast shipowners to prevent AFL maritime workers and longshoremen from taking part in the impending strike. This move undeniably worked against any unity on a national scale.

Despite the treacherous position adopted by the AFL leadership, the Pacific Coast maritime workers continued to fight for their demands. In June 1946, a clash between the shipping companies and the Committee for Maritime Unity became inevitable. The shipowners continued to sabotage negotiations. The President threatened to step in and use the Navy to break the strike. Even some of the leaders of the West Coast maritime union became doubtful of success and were ready to accept the shipowners' offer of a \$12.50 monthly wage rise. The rank-and-file members, however, rejected this compromise and demanded that their leaders continue negotiating the terms set by the Committee for Maritime Unity.² The Committee set June 15 as the deadline for a strike embracing all ship crews and all ports on the West Coast. The companies realized that it was useless to hold out, and reopened negotiations. Besides a wage increase, they agreed to a 48-hour week with overtime pay for the eight hours worked over 40.³

Thus, without actually going on strike, but merely threatening to, the maritime workers achieved impressive success. The chief factors making for it were their militancy and unity

¹ *Труд и каюмар в США*, p. 132.

² *Political Affairs*, July 1946, p. 585.

³ *Ibid.*

and the support they received from the CIO and maritime unions across the world affiliated with the World Federation of Trade Unions.

The years 1945 and especially 1946 remain a high mark in the history of the American labor movement's strike struggle. In the first postwar year alone there were about 5,000 strikes in the country, involving 4,600,000 workers and resulting in a total of 116 million man-days lost.¹ In such industrial states as Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York and California, the left wing in the labor movement had considerable influence. Progressive forces were strongly in evidence in the CIO, where they were represented in the leadership of a number of unions. Communists played an important role in these unions. They carried on educational work, sustained a spirit of solidarity, participated in strikes, and helped organize collections for strike funds.

At the same time, opportunist sentiments fostered by a close-knit group of rightist leaders prevailed in the executive bodies of the AFL and Railroad Brotherhoods. Not infrequently, the leaders openly opposed strikes, or, at crucial moments, as during the railroad strike, made concessions to the employers or the authorities.

A considerable part of the working people had illusions that Truman would continue Roosevelt's policies. They believed his promises to be true to the New Deal and pursue a genuine Fair Deal policy. The propaganda of the top labor leaders fostered these illusions. The AFL leadership assured the workers that "the position taken by the American Federation of Labor on wage stabilization, collective bargaining and related industrial questions has been substantiated by President Truman and the Council of Economic Advisors".²

As for the CIO leaders headed by Murray, their situation was different from that of Green's group because of the strong influence of progressive forces in the CIO. In the first postwar years, the CIO leaders, although not always firm and consistent, nonetheless played a significant role in the strike

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1953, p. 222.

² *The Union Postal Clerk*, March 1947, p. 7.

struggle. It should be noted that the United Mine Workers, which was in the AFL at the time, also had a big organizing influence on the strike struggle during that period.

The eighth convention of the CIO, held in Atlantic City in November 1946, took place against a background of mass strike activity. The convention devoted a great deal of attention to the fight for higher wages. Delegates spoke with concern about the deteriorating living standards of the workers after the end of the war. One resolution said: "The elimination of overtime, down-grading, the transfer of workers from war industries to civilian industries, from high-paid jobs to low-paid jobs, the re-timing of incentive systems and other factors drastically reduced weekly earnings of the vast majority of American wage earners." It said further that "after the establishment of the Administration's wage-price policy in February of this year, powerful American employers entered into a conspiracy which sought, through unwarranted price increases, to destroy the living standards of the workers".¹ The resolution sharply condemned the policy of employers aimed at abolishing price controls.

The convention called for the establishment of a 65-cent-an-hour minimum wage, rising to 75 cents in subsequent years, and extending coverage of the minimum wage law to all workers.²

The CIO set forth a progressive program for reconversion. Murray maintained the centrist position he had held during the war, and had not yet brought himself to openly alter his tactics and switch from a temporary alliance with the leftists to an offensive against them. Even some of the more outspoken rightist leaders felt that with the given balance of forces in the first postwar years it would be inappropriate to openly demonstrate their negative attitude to the left elements in the CIO. Progressive sentiments were still stronger in the middle and lower echelons of the labor union leadership.

As a result of the mass actions in 1945-1946, the workers succeeded in holding back the monopolies' offensive against the living standards of the working class and to slow down the

¹ *Final Proceedings of the Eighth Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, p. 234.

² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

decline in real wages that had begun with the fall in employment, reductions of hourly wage rates and increases in work loads. In 1946, the workers won wage increases averaging 18.5 cents an hour in the steel, automobile, electrical and several other industries.

After the ideological and organizational crisis of 1944-1945, the Communist Party launched a drive to consolidate its ranks. The leadership headed by William Z. Foster, Eugene Dennis and other members of the National Committee was faced with serious difficulties in eliminating the effects of right revisionism.

As we have seen, the opportunism of Browder and his followers was exposed at the 13th convention. Browder assured the delegates that he would submit to the decisions of the convention, but shied away from repudiating his anti-Marxist views. When called to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities he dissociated himself altogether from the Party and refused to speak in its defense, stating that he was a private citizen and had nothing to do with the activities of the Party.¹

Toward the end of 1945 Browder began publishing a newspaper whose orientation testified that Browder maintained his anti-Party revisionist position. The upshot was that in February 1946, the National Committee expelled him from the Communist Party. Browder's supporters dropped out of the Party too. The decision said that he was expelled for opposing the political line of the Party.

Browderism caused great damage to the Party. For one thing, the Party lost many of its members. In mid-1944 membership had stood at 63,044 (plus 15,000 members serving in the armed forces). By January 1946, it had gone down to 52,824.² In a number of places the position and influence of Party organizations and their leaders were undermined. The proportion of industrial workers in the membership fell. In New York City, for example, it declined from 34 to 29 per cent, with 71 per cent of the city's

¹ See *Political Affairs*, April 1946, pp. 340, 341.

² William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, p. 437.

membership consisting of white-collar workers, professionals and housewives.¹

Under these circumstances, it was essential to strengthen and expand the Party organizations at industrial enterprises. At the beginning of 1946, there were only 122 Party members at the General Motors plants,² and only small and scattered groups of Communists at other major autoplants and in the steel industry.

In its efforts to enhance its standing with the masses, the Communist Party had to overcome not only the internal difficulties caused by the subversive activities of Earl Browder and his supporters, but also the fierce anti-Communist activities of reactionary labor leaders. Red-baiting in the unions, which increased sharply after the war, once again confirmed the validity of Lenin's words when he wrote: "These men, the 'leaders' of opportunism, will no doubt resort to every device of bourgeois diplomacy and to the aid of bourgeois governments, the clergy, the police and the courts, to keep Communists out of the trade unions, oust them by every means, make their work in the trade unions as unpleasant as possible, and insult, bait and persecute them."³

Various means were used to discredit the Communists in the eyes of workers. Communists found it increasingly hard to work in the unions. Even in the CIO, an open offensive against Communists began in 1946. To be sure, Murray and other leaders did not immediately abandon their tactics of putting up with the Communists and forming a temporary alliance with them. But the rightists within the CIO brought increasing pressure to bear upon Murray to make him withdraw from this alliance and join the anti-Communist forces in the CIO unions.

Murray was a Catholic, and the Catholic Church of America and the Vatican repeatedly expressed their displeasure with his indecisiveness in struggling against leftists in the unions. The bourgeois press also exerted pressure.

But while Murray still wavered, anti-Communist leaders in the automobile, shipbuilding and electrical workers' unions

¹ *Political Affairs*, March 1946, p. 232.

² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 54-55.

began a general offensive on their own. Under these new conditions, Murray decided to abandon his maneuvering between the right and left and openly joined the anti-communist camp. On May 17, 1946, a convention of the steelworkers union in Atlantic City, New Jersey, adopted a resolution of their executive committee which said that the union would not tolerate any outside interference in its affairs by Communist, Socialist or any other groups. In November of that year, on the eve of the eighth convention of the CIO, Murray publicly announced that a similar resolution would be submitted at that convention.

Indeed, the eighth convention the CIO held shortly thereafter declared that "the Congress of Industrial Organizations is an American institution dedicated to the attainment of its well-defined social and economic objectives within the framework of American political democracy".¹ Such declarations of devotion to Americanism had been made before, but this time the following statement was added: "We, the delegates of the Eighth Constitutional Convention of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, resent and reject efforts of the Communist Party or other political parties and their adherents to interfere in the affairs of the CIO. This convention serves notice that we will not tolerate such interference."²

The bourgeois press hailed the anti-Communist stance of the CIO leaders. However, feelings of solidarity still remained at the grass-roots level. At that time the CIO united nearly five million organized industrial and white-collar workers, and the spirit of the war years was generally still high among them. It was impossible to turn such an enormous organization in the opposite direction all at once; it required some time for anti-communism to gain the upper hand in the CIO.

After the eighth convention, the rightist leaders began to fan anti-Communist sentiments in the locals. Murray urged his supporters to stop cooperating with leftist elements. The hostile campaign launched against Communists frequently turned into open persecution, similar to the practices in the AFL.

¹ *Final Proceedings of the Eighth Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, p. 113.

² *Ibid.*, p. 114.

A new period of CIO history began, a period characterized by the abandonment of the principles on which it had emerged and which it had developed in the course of ten years. It was the beginning of a phase of rapprochement between its top leaders with the leaders of the AFL. A meeting of the Communist Party's National Committee in June 1947 noted that "the relations between the Left-Progressive forces and those Center forces associated with Murray, are probably more strained today than at any time since the formation of the CIO".¹



Henry Winston, National Chairman of the Communist Party USA

Despite the extremely difficult conditions, the Communist Party fought on for its position as a political organization. Immediately after it was reconstituted it issued several political documents demanding an end to American intervention in China, protesting US imperialist policy in Latin America, the Philippines and the Middle East, and calling for the establishment of a lasting peace.

The Party also focussed on domestic political and economic issues. It actively supported the popular demand for 60

million jobs; condemned the policy of militarizing the economy; and demanded that the industrialists and the bourgeois state bear the expenses of reconversion. Two important events in the life of the Party during the reconversion period were the February and July 1946 plenary sessions of its National Committee.

¹ *Political Affairs*, August 1947, p. 712.

At the July 1946 plenary session, William Foster and Eugene Dennis delivered reports in which they noted that the past year had seen the re-establishment of the party organizations dissolved in 1944 after the decision to transform the party into a non-partisan political association. This facilitated the party's more active participation in the peace movement, the strike movement, and the struggle for the rights of the Negro people. Regarding the fact that the party's influence within the working class had fallen during the struggle with Browderism, the NC specially emphasized the need to bring the work of Communists in the trade unions to a new and higher level.

The session elected Eugene Dennis General Secretary of the party, Henry Winston was approved Organization Secretary, and John Williamson Labor Secretary.¹

The process of liquidating Browderism and re-establishing the party and its influence in the labor movement required not only time but strenuous efforts in overcoming serious difficulties caused mainly by the domestic political situation.

After its 16th convention, the party steered a course towards expanding its activity in certain states in an effort to re-establish ties with the workers in various industries and unions. It was not an easy task, and it was made that much harder by the police persecution that followed once the ruling circles plunged the country into cold war.

¹ *Ibid.*, September 1946, pp. 770-809.

CHAPTER VIII

US LABOR IN THE COLD WAR PERIOD.
THE CIO PURGE

After the war, the United States made an open bid for world "leadership" and adopted a policy directed against the Soviet Union. In that period, the giant corporations which dominated American political and economic life set out to spread their dominance over the entire world. They pressured the government into abandoning Roosevelt's policy of American-Soviet friendship and Big Three unity—the very thing which was essential for preserving peace. In US foreign policy this turn was reflected in a number of speeches made by leaders of the bourgeois world. On March 5, 1946, Churchill delivered his aggressive anti-Soviet speech at Fulton, Missouri, where he was introduced to the audience by President Truman. Much of what he said coincided with the sentiments and public utterances of Truman, Byrnes, George Marshall, many members of Congress and other officials who took part in shaping US foreign policy.

A month after Churchill's Fulton speech, Truman said in an Armed Forces Day speech that the United States had to do everything possible to maintain its "leading role" in the world. On March 12, 1947, speaking before a joint session of Congress, he outlined what came to be known as the Truman Doctrine, in accordance with which he asked Congress to appropriate \$400,000,000 for "aid" to Greece and Turkey.¹ Congress gave its approval, and on May 22, the Truman Doctrine came into force.

¹ CR, March 12, 1947, pp. 1980-81.

In April 1947, Bernard Baruch, a representative of big business and prominent statesman, speaking at Columbia, South Carolina, was the first to utter the words "cold war", which were picked up and widely spread by the American press.

On June 5, 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall, speaking at Harvard University in Boston, outlined the basic points of a plan for the economic rehabilitation of Europe, subsequently known as the Marshall Plan. The plan pursued the aim of creating in Europe, under US direction, a military-political bloc opposing the socialist countries. It was outrightly anti-Soviet in character.

On July 26, 1947, the President signed a National Security Act, under which a National Security Council was established. The Council was called upon to look into the problems arising in connection with the policy of building up the military and economic might of American imperialism. The beginning of the cold war was closely linked with intensified political reaction. A resolution of the 16th convention of the Communist Party noted that this policy manifested itself in persecution, repression and "witch hunts" that poisoned the political atmosphere.

Thus, there was a turn not only in foreign policy but in domestic policy as well, and its essence, as the Communist Party defined it, was that the Roosevelt period of bourgeois reforms had ended, and a period of a more open dictatorship of capital had begun. Beginning in 1947 the ruling circles made increasing use not only of social demagoguery but also of crude pressure against the labor movement. Seizing control of enterprises became in Truman's hands a tested means of suppressing strikes. Truman and his administration veered further and further away from Roosevelt's course. In labor circles there was an ever sharper awareness that Truman's bill calling for the drafting of strikers into the Army and the repressive measures taken against them constituted the first step in a cold war against the working class. As historians Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais rightly noted, "the chief victims of the cold war were the American people", above all the workers. Repressive measures were used against them more and more often, which was something the monopolies

needed not only to break the will of strikers, but for political considerations as well.

The tremendous sweep of the postwar strike struggle strengthened militant sentiments in the labor movement, causing anxiety in the ruling circles, where there was particular concern over the growing influence of progressive unions affiliated with the CIO. By the end of 1946, the CIO had a membership of over six million.¹ Its active participation in strikes and its program of struggle to improve the living standards of the workers provoked a great deal of irritation on the part of the monopolies. This was reflected in US Chamber of Commerce publications in which even the rightist CIO leaders were called "Marxists" because they considered the profits of the big corporations to be excessive. The monopolies were also uneasy about the fact that interest and good will toward the Soviet people and their trade unions had grown markedly in the unions and particularly the CIO during the war.

The organizers of the cold war sought to suppress sentiments of this kind in the American people. Even the bourgeois press had to admit that the momentum of pro-Soviet feeling worked up during the war to support the Grand Alliance had continued, too heavily, from their point of view, after the armistice. This made it difficult for the administration to pursue a stiffer foreign policy.

In October 1945, a CIO delegation which included James Carey and Joseph Curran visited the Soviet Union. Upon its return to the United States, the delegation published a report on the trip, in which it was stated that the delegation was particularly struck by the heroism of a people who, in incredibly difficult conditions, halted the Nazis at the very gates of their major cities and who, in so doing, helped to change the course of the war in favor of the United Nations. The report said: "We were horrified by the wholesale destruction wrought by the Nazis; but we were filled with the greatest admiration for the determination and united effort of the people, which has already brought about substantial reconstruction and promises great things for future elevation

¹ *Final Proceedings of the Eighth Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, p. 2.

of living standards."¹ CIO president Philip Murray wrote an introduction to this report, in which he said that he considered the report to be a document of paramount importance not only for the American workers but also for all those who wanted to know the truth about the Soviet trade unions and wished to contribute to the establishment of friendship and mutual understanding between the peoples.²

It should be stressed that at that time Murray felt it to be to his advantage to side with the democratic forces since progressive feelings in the CIO were very strong. Moreover, all this was happening at a time when the peoples of the world, including the American people, were under the strong impression of the Soviet Army's enormous contribution to the defeat of fascism.

A number of American labor unions sent friendly messages to Soviet trade unions. The Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians, a CIO affiliate, noted in its reply to greetings from the AUCCTU to its eighth national convention (December 1945): "We followed with great admiration the struggle and achievements of your people, scientists and specialists in achieving victory over fascism."³ Many American organizations called upon their leaders to continue and strengthen cooperation with Soviet trade unions.

The logical outcome of these contacts was the approval by the CIO executive board of the proposal by the AUCCTU on creating an American-Soviet Trade Union Committee, composed of five representatives from each side.⁴ Chosen to represent the CIO on this committee were Philip Murray, Sidney Hillman, R. J. Thomas, Albert Fitzgerald and Lee Pressman. The CIO executive board's decision to continue cooperating with Soviet trade unions was in tune with the sentiments of the broad masses of American workers, who approved and supported the idea of creating the Committee. The AUCCTU received a great many extremely friendly letters from American unions.

¹ *Report on the Activity of the World Federation of Trade Unions*, May 1949-August 1953, Vienna, 1953, pp. 32, 33.

² *Ibid.*

³ AUCCTU Central Archive, Moscow.

⁴ *Ibid.*

All these facts indicated that in the early postwar years the two trends in the US labor movement—the democratic and the reactionary—were developing with a certain predominance of the progressive-democratic trend. This was seen, in particular, in the attitude of a number of CIO unions to the Soviet Union and Soviet trade unions.

The ruling circles of the USA regarded these manifestations by American workingmen of feelings of international solidarity as being the result of the influence exerted by progressive figures, many of whom they deemed it necessary to subject to persecution for their membership in the Communist Party.

As the reactionary forces pursued cold war on the foreign policy front, they also intensified their offensive at home.

The results of the congressional elections of 1946 were distressing for the Democratic Party. Winning 188 of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives, the Democrats lost 54 of the seats they had held in the 79th Congress. They also lost 11 seats in the Senate. The Republican Party held a clear advantage.

The new balance of forces in Congress could not avoid affecting the sentiments of the labor unions, within which there was also much friction on political issues, especially due to their failures in Congress in the field of labor legislation.

In the committees and houses of Congress, Taft, Vandenberg, Hartley, Clare E. Hoffman, Wood, Thomas, Rankin, Bilbo, Bolle, Smith and many other conservatives formed a reactionary bloc. They met with strong resistance from Senators Pepper, Wagner, James M. Mead, Murray, Downey, Guffey, Morse and others who opposed abrogation of Roosevelt's legislation and continued the fight to keep the Wagner Act in effect. In an atmosphere of fierce debates, the advocates of repressive legislation succeeded in 1947 in pushing through Congress the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act. This was the logical outcome of the campaign of anti-labor repression that had been launched during the fight against the strike movement.

Since early 1946, a number of anti-labor bills had been introduced in Congress. General Counsel of the AFL Joseph A. Padway said at an AFL convention in 1946 that "never

before in the history of the Nation has any Congress considered so many anti-labor bills".¹ Among those he listed were the Ahrens, Hatch-Ball-Burton, Hobbs, Case, and Lea bills and the above-mentioned bill to give the President emergency powers.

The authors of these bills sought to give legal sanction to various means of suppressing strikes and progressive trends in the unions, compulsory arbitration, the establishment of a "cooling off" period during which a strike could not be called, prohibition of secondary boycotts and prosecution of democratically-inclined union officials.

The debates in Congress on the labor question were accompanied by a propaganda campaign in the bourgeois press. Workers were accused of being unpatriotic, and ridiculous assertions were made that strikes were conducted "on orders from Moscow".

The House Committee on Un-American Activities, under the chairmanship of George P. Thomas who was later found guilty of embezzling public funds, called eminent figures in the world of science and culture to testify before it. An extremely reactionary move was Truman's executive order No. 9835 of March 21, 1947, requiring loyalty checks on government employees. Loyalty review boards were established, and a campaign was launched, during which thousands of Americans were subjected to questioning on charges of disloyalty.

In the meantime, while FBI agents were carefully studying the dossiers of government employees in the departments and agencies in Washington in an effort to find facts that might compromise them, Senator Robert A. Taft (Rep., Ohio) and Representative Fred A. Hartley (Rep., New Jersey) introduced a bill designed to regulate labor-management relations.

The authors of the bill took into account the nature of the debates in Congress and the prevailing feeling in business circles, and especially heeded the voice of the NAM and the Chamber of Commerce, who were widely publicizing the basic points they felt should be kept in mind when drafting new labor legislation. At the 35th annual conference of the Chamber of Commerce, representatives of big business

¹ AFL, *Proceedings*, 1946, p. 331.

demanded that the closed shop be outlawed, sympathetic strikes banned, and all strike votes taken by secret ballot. It was no accident that a number of provisions in the Taft-Hartley bill were close in aim and spirit to the points in the Chamber of Commerce resolution. The bill curtailed the rights of unions provided for in the Wagner Act. To a significant degree the unions would be deprived of their independence and placed under the control of the government.

The progressive forces condemned the bill. The first among those who voiced protest were the Communists. On June 8, 1947, the National Committee of the Communist Party called on the labor unions to declare a one-day protest strike throughout the country, and suggested that an extraordinary conference be convened in which all groups in the labor movement would take part. Energetic opposition to the bill came from the CIO and a number of AFL organizations. In the spring of 1947, joint committees arose in some states, pledging to fight against the attempts of reaction to curtail the rights of the unions. One major event was a large demonstration against the Taft-Hartley bill that took place in Iowa. But even so, no really mass protest developed.

True to its principle of "staying out of proletarian politics", the AFL leadership rejected the Communist Party's suggested one-day protest strike. It came out against the bill, but was reluctant to resort to the strike. With the leading centers refusing to take direct action against the anti-labor legislation, the protest movement could not become an organized and nationwide effort. It remained local and fragmented.

Only a small group of unions tried to force Congress to heed the voice of the masses. The executive committee of the United Auto Workers declared that it would insist on a presidential veto if the bill were passed. In a statement it said: "The enactment of this bill into law would set off a whole new era of industrial strife and friction—the very opposite of its stated purpose—because its terms give encouragement and new weapons to anti-labor employers."¹

The United Mine Workers also denounced the bill. On June 14, 1947, it declared that "it looks like we are in for a decade of

¹ *New York Herald Tribune*, June 13, 1947.

industrial, political and economic hell unless the Supreme Court throws the bill into the discard".¹ The National Maritime Union (CIO) called for joint action of unions connected with the merchant fleet to fight the Taft-Hartley bill. On June 4, 1947, at a big meeting in New York's Madison Square Garden, AFL members urged Truman to veto the bill. The AFL said that it would voice its disapproval of any congressman who voted to override a presidential veto. On June 10, also in Madison Square Garden, thousands of CIO members gathered and also urged the President to veto the bill.

However, the anti-communist sentiments fanned by bourgeois propaganda impeded labor unity on the issue and caused confusion in the ranks of the bill's opponents. Actually, only the United Mine Workers, the typographers' union, a number of unions with left leaderships, the Communist Party and the American Labor Party of New York were consistent foes of the Taft-Hartley bill.²

In May and June 1947, the White House received over 450,000 letters, most of which called for a presidential veto. On the whole, however, the movement proved to be limited and not influential enough to block the organized onslaught of the monopolies. It was unable to get a majority in Congress to vote against the bill. This fact showed the weakness of the labor movement and its inability to stop the forces of reaction at the crucial moment.

Nonetheless, political leaders in Congress and the White House, including Truman, could not ignore the public opinion that developed during the protest movement. The veto which the President actually did put on the bill on June 20 was the result of the pressure of public opinion and Truman's personal fear of losing out in the election coming up in 1948. The approach of that moment forced him to maneuver and ultimately to take a stand against the Taft-Hartley bill. In a radio address he went so far as to say that the bill would usurp the rights of labor.³ In speaking out so decisively he

¹ *Ibid.*, June 14, 1947.

² See William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, p. 489.

³ See *New York Herald Tribune*, June 21, 1947.

undoubtedly took into account the likelihood that Congress would override his veto. Indeed, on that very day, the House of Representatives rejected Truman's veto, and the Senate followed suit on June 23.

Thus, on June 23, 1947, the bill became law. It went into effect on August 22, 1947 as the Labor-Management Relations Act. 1947.¹

The Taft-Hartley Act was designed to nullify many of the gains made by the American working class during the fierce class battles of the 1930s. This law was a veritable charter of strikebreaking. Through it, the ruling circles of the USA intended to put an end to the mass strike struggle and render the unions powerless. The Act's Declaration of Policy optimistically posited the possibility of avoiding industrial strife. In the view of its drafters, this could be accomplished "if employers, employees, and labor organizations each recognize under law one another's legitimate rights in their relations with each other, and above all recognize under law that neither party has any right in its relations with any other to engage in acts or practices which jeopardize the public health, safety, or interest".² In a somewhat veiled form this statement demanded of workers that they abandon militant forms of struggle. The same goes for the stated purpose of the Act, namely, "in order to promote the full flow of commerce, to prescribe the legitimate rights of both employees and employers in their relations affecting commerce, to provide orderly and peaceful procedures for preventing the interference by either with the legitimate rights of the other, to protect the rights of individual employees in their relations with labor organizations"³ (emphasis added—*Auth.*).

Pursuing the aim of preventing class conflicts by "peaceful" means, the drafters of the law proceeded only from the interests of the employers. In the words of the opponents of the Wagner Act, the Taft-Hartley Act re-established fairness, allegedly violated by Roosevelt's New Deal. The Act implied

¹ *Compilation of Laws Relating to Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration Between Employers and Employees*, comp. by E. A. Lewis, Washington, 1955, pp. 669-98.

² *Ibid.*, p. 669.

³ *Ibid.*

that unions had exceeded their powers when they dared violate the rights of individual workers by demanding that they become union members upon being hired. So now Congress was establishing the principle of "free" hiring of workers without the interference of the unions in the activity of personnel departments, which meant, in the words of the Act, protecting "the rights of individual employees in their relations with labor organizations". But in fact this was an infringement by the law upon the closed shop principle which labor had fought so hard for and which the monopolies had recognized in the preceding years.

Section 7 of Title I of the Act said that employees have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, and to bargain collectively. At the same time, it added a point prescribing the right of employees "to refrain from any or all of such activities".¹ This point became an important means of struggle against the growth and strengthening of the unions.

Among the points prescribing what "shall be an unfair labor practice for an employer" was the following [Section 8 (a) (3)]: "by discrimination in regard to hire or tenure to encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization."² This, too, struck at the closed shop principle. This in fact meant that a labor union had no right to interfere in the hiring or firing of workers by requiring that a given enterprise hire only union members.

One of the important aims of the law was to impose a virtual ban on strikes by means other than formal prohibition. Only those unions and those workers who did not resort to strikes could enjoy the rights and privileges provided for by the law. The Act specified: "The elimination of such practices is a necessary condition to the assurance of the rights herein guaranteed."³

What obstacles did this Act put in the way of labor strikes? Very many. It created a whole system of measures for government intervention as a third, supposedly "impartial",

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 673-74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 674.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 670.

force standing over both employees and employers. First of all, Section 3 of Title I stated that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) was to administer the Act as a whole.¹ The name was the same as in the years of the New Deal, but the purposes and tasks of the Board were now different. And this is understandable. The Wagner Act was a piece of liberal legislation, whereas the Taft-Hartley Act became an instrument of repressive policy. Roosevelt's legislation placed restrictions upon employers to prevent unbridled infringements upon the elementary rights which labor had won in the 1930s, while the new legislation all too clearly favored employers who violated the rights of workers to organize, strike and bargain collectively. The Taft-Hartley Act set up an extremely complicated legal procedure for considering union grievances.

One important aspect of the law was that it required each union officer to file an affidavit stating that he was not a member of the Communist Party nor affiliated with any "subversive" organization. The Act specified that the NLRB would not recognize any union unless its officers had filed such an affidavit.²

The Taft-Hartley Act created the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, whose functions are defined by its very name. The law said that if the FMCS was unable to bring the sides in a dispute to agreement by conciliation, it should try to induce the parties voluntarily to seek other means of settlement without resorting to a strike, lockout or other coercion.³ These provisions duplicated certain points in the Watson-Parker Railroad Labor Act of 1926.⁴

The law also prescribed that neither a union nor an employer could lawfully terminate or modify an existing contract unless the party desiring such termination or modification serves a written notice to the other party sixty days prior to its expiration date.⁵ Any employee who engaged in a strike within that sixty-day period was losing his status as an

¹ *Compilation of Laws...*, p. 672.

² *Ibid.*, p. 680.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 688.

⁴ See p. 143 of Volume I of the present work.

⁵ *Compilation of Laws...*, p. 676.

employee.¹ The law empowered the government, through its mediation agencies, to obtain a court injunction against an impending strike or against continuation of a strike already in progress. This injunction could last 80 days, its purpose being to allow time for the sides to cool off and the dispute to be settled.

If the President felt that a threatened or actual strike or lockout could imperil the national health or safety, he could appoint a board of inquiry to look into the issues and make a written report to him. On the basis of the report the President might then direct the Attorney General to secure a court injunction against the given strike or lockout. As an extreme measure, the President could declare a state of emergency in the entire section of the economy in which a threatening situation had arisen, and at his own discretion establish control over the struck enterprise or over the entire industry.

The law banned boycotts and sympathetic strikes. It also made it unlawful for government employees to participate in strikes. "Any individual employed by the United States or by any such agency who strikes shall be discharged immediately from his employment...."² It also prohibited union contributions and expenditures associated with any political elections. The latter provision was borrowed from the Smith-Connally Act of 1943, which expired six months after the war.

In passing the Taft-Hartley Act, Congress pursued the aim of establishing control not only over labor's strike struggle but also over the entire internal life and activities of the unions. To this end, the unions were required to file an annual report on their activities with the Secretary of Labor. The report had to show the name and address of the union, the names and salaries of its three principal officers, the initiation fee and monthly dues, and complete financial accounts of the organization.³ "Any person who willfully violates any of the provisions of this section shall, upon conviction thereof, be

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 695.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 679.

guilty of a misdemeanor and be subject to a fine of not more than \$10,000 or to imprisonment for not more than one year, or both."¹

Such is the main substance of the Taft-Hartley Act, under which the freedom of action of labor organizations and the right of workers to organize and to strike were sharply restricted.

In the first three years after the Taft-Hartley Act was passed, the NLRB brought 83 court actions against participants in strikes. Supported by these decisions, employers frequently gained an advantage in the struggle against strikers, and made wide use of strikebreakers and secret informers. But however burdensome the consequences of the Act may have been for the working class, the law did not come anywhere close to fully justifying the hopes that the legislators and industrial business circles had pinned on it. Although it did frighten many union leaders with the prospect of being fined or imprisoned, it could not suspend the natural law of capitalism—class struggle.

The slump in the economy caused by reconversion was followed by a slow rise in industrial production between 1947 and 1949. However, in 1949, the economy went through a short recession associated with a reduction in defense spending from \$44 billion in 1946 to \$12 billion in 1948.² This partial crisis affected only some industries. Unlike the production slump during reconversion, operating in 1949 were such crisis factors as uneven development of the economy, an increase in stocks of unsold goods, and a decline in purchasing power due to high unemployment and a sharp drop in savings. As a result, the index of industrial production in 1949 was 64.7 (according to Federal Reserve Board data, with the index set at 100 for 1957-1959). The volume of industrial production had dropped by four per cent compared with the peak in 1948.

The partial decline in production contributed to the growth of unemployment. The number of fully unemployed was approaching the five million mark, causing greater alarm in

¹ *Compilation of Laws...*, p. 693.

² *The Economic Almanac*, 1956, p. 455.

the unions and labor's discontent with the policies of the Democratic Party. The existence of a great mass of job seekers began to exert pressure on wages in industry.

The strike struggle developed on a smaller scale in 1947 and 1948 than in 1946, a record year in number of strikes, but even so it was intensive, as can be seen from the following figures¹:

	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
Work stoppages	4,750	4,985	3,693	3,419	3,606
Workers involved (thousands)	3,470	4,600	2,170	1,960	3,030
Man-days idle (millions)	38.0	116.0	34.6	34.1	50.5

Only in 1949 did the strike struggle again show an increase.

Among the strikes in 1947 mention should be made of the action taken by 200,000 coal miners. The United Mine Workers emphatically condemned the Taft-Hartley Act. John L. Lewis, despite his hostile attitude to communism, declined to file an affidavit that he was not a member of the Communist Party, and reiterated that this was the first ugly, savage thrust of fascism in America. Criticizing the position taken by a number of labor leaders who were reluctant to fight, he said at a UMW convention: "Is it true that the leaders of our movement are to be the first of our mighty hosts of eight million members to put their tails between their legs and run like cravens before the threat of the Taft-Hartley bill?"² Indeed, there were many such leaders who rushed to the NLRB to assure the government that they did not belong to the Communist Party. But there were also many who hesitated doing so, waiting to see how things developed, while some continued to speak out against the law.

The CIO convention in 1947 condemned the Taft-Hartley Act and called on every union "to fight day and night for the repeal of this vicious piece of legislation".³ A resolution

¹ *Труд при капитализме*. Статистический сборник, Moscow, 1964, p. 894.

² Bert Cochran (Ed.), *American Labor in Midpassage*, New York, 1959, p. 177.

³ *Final Proceedings of the Ninth Constitutional Convention of the Congress of Industrial Organizations*, Boston, 1947, p. 201.

condemning the anti-labor legislation was also adopted at an AFL convention in 1947.¹

The first half of 1947 saw the continuation of several strikes that had begun in 1946. Among these was the automobile workers' strike described here earlier, especially at General Motors. It ended in March 1947 with a compromise agreement.

There were strikes in the metal-working, construction and other industries. In June, strikes took place in the coal industry. In August, ship builders and steelworkers went out on strike, and at the end of the year, a printers' strike began in Chicago, during which the workers defended their right to a union shop. In many of these strikes, particularly the miners' strike, demands for the repeal of the Taft-Hartley law were made.

In 1948, the West Coast longshoremen had to fight off attacks by the Waterfront Employers Association, which was trying to abolish the hiring hall that operated under the union's control. The ILWU not only frustrated these plans, but also introduced new points in the collective bargaining contract, demanding a wage increase, a shorter workday, and improved safety conditions.

In accordance with the Taft-Hartley Act, the government asked for a court injunction to postpone the strike for 80 days. When the injunction was about to expire, the employers agreed to raise wages only five cents an hour and to add another five cents an hour to holiday compensation. However, they continued to seek employer control over the hiring hall. In response to the stubborn resistance of the companies, the union was compelled to call a strike on September 2, 1948.

Business activity in almost all the West Coast ports came to a standstill. Pickets against strikebreakers were posted everywhere. The three-month-long strike forced the ship-owners to capitulate and agree to sign a contract on the union's terms. The hiring hall remained under union control, and wages were raised by 15 cents an hour.

The year 1949 was marked by a fresh upsurge of the strike movement. Strikes broke out on the city transit system in

¹ AFL, *Proceedings*, 1947, p. 588.

Philadelphia, and at Ford plants in Detroit. The biggest strike, involving about 150,000 Ford workers, took place in May. The workers were fighting for the right of their union to have a say in establishing work loads, which were then being set arbitrarily by the plant administrations. Management refused to make concessions, and the dispute was submitted for arbitration.

These were only some of the actions taken by American workers during the period 1947-1949. All of them indicated that, although the Taft-Hartley Act tended to reduce the rate and number of strikes, it was unable to suppress the strike struggle. At the same time, the strike struggle during this period showed that, politically, the movement as a whole was weak, inasmuch as the working class was unable to rise to a high enough level of organized protest against the anti-labor legislation. As a result, reaction succeeded in imposing the Taft-Hartley Act on the working class. This was a serious defeat for the broad masses of working people.

The unions faced a choice: either to retreat before the onslaught of reaction, or put up a fight against the Taft-Hartley Act.

In the course of the pre-election struggle of 1948, a Progressive Party came into being. The leading role in its creation was played by progressive intellectuals seeking to prevent a sharp shift to the right in the political situation, progressive labor unions, the Communist Party and the American Labor Party. The Communist Party organization in the state of New York played an active part in the creation of this party. As for the broad working-class masses, they were left out of the movement as a result of the rightist union leaders' opposition to the new party.

In view of the political reaction that had set in, the progressive forces found themselves in an extremely difficult situation. They were subjected to political baiting and discrimination. The position that the American Labor Party of New York and its leader, Vito Marcantonio, were in was in itself enough to make clear the class essence of American democracy. The entire bourgeois press, television and radio, the Church, powerful government forces and the hirelings of the

monopolies were up in arms against this party and its leader.

As for the unions, the vast majority of them went along with the Democratic Party. However, there was no unity in their ranks on specific issues: the positions of the AFL and the CIO in the elections differed considerably. The CIO Political Action Committee—which after the death in 1946 of chairman Sidney Hillman was headed by Jack Kroll, a leader of the clothing workers' union—became very active in support of the Democratic Party. Although the AFL was oriented toward the Democrats, a significant percentage of its members voted Republican.

In December 1946, a liberal organization, called Progressive Citizens of America, was created at a conference in New York sponsored by the National Civil Political Action Committee. The new organization was formed through the merger of the NCPAC and the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, with the participation of local progressive groups. Along with such figures as Henry Wallace and Fiorello LaGuardia, a number of CIO representatives became members of the new organization.

On January 4, 1947, another organization—Americans for Democratic Action—was formed during a conference of public and labor figures held in Washington. Among those promoting the ADA were the journalists, the Alsop brothers. The founders of the ADA considered it to be their high duty to support the foreign policy of the United States and to fight communism. Some CIO and AFL figures joined the ADA, most of them becoming members of the national council of the organization. Thus, there were CIO leaders in organizations having entirely different political orientations.

The Progressive Citizens of America later took part in creating the Progressive Party, whose political course differed substantially from the positions of the bourgeois parties. It opposed persecution of the Communist Party and left-wing labor unions, and condemned the policy of repression pursued by the Truman Administration. Therefore, anyone who joined the ranks of the Progressive Citizens of America, but stood to the right of this organization in his views and sentiments would find himself in a difficult position. It is not surprising that on

March 13, 1947, the executive board of the CIO barred CIO union officers from joining either organization. Most of the executive board members felt that participation in these organizations by CIO officers could be interpreted as an abandonment of the CIO's "non-partisan" policy and as the beginning of "ideological differences" that could split the labor coalition backing the Democratic Party.

In January 1948, the Progressive Citizens of America held its second convention in Chicago, with eminent scientists, writers and union activists taking part. The convention declared its support of Henry Wallace in the forthcoming presidential election. Wallace called upon all supporters of peace to unite into a new party.

A constituent convention to establish the new party was held July 23-25, 1948, in Philadelphia. With over 3,000 delegates in attendance, it adopted the constitution and program of the Progressive Party.

The Progressive Party platform pointed out that the American people wanted peace, but the old parties, obedient to the dictates of the monopolies and the military, were preparing for war. By spending more and more billions of dollars of public funds for war preparations, it was impossible to win the peace, but it was possible to make profits. Yet this was the policy of the two old parties, a policy that profaned peace. The American people, the platform went on, love freedom. But the old parties, acting in the interests of forces enjoying special privileges, were colluding to destroy traditional American freedoms.

The platform also called for the prohibition of segregation and discrimination, abolition of the poll tax, anti-lynching legislation, protection of the rights of Communists and other political groups, price controls, the nationalization of banks, railroads, the merchant fleet and the gas and electric industry, repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, and a long-range agricultural development program.

Organizationally, the Progressive Party was a federation of various groups and associations on a collective membership basis. Progressive CIO unions and a number of organizations of intellectuals joined the party. The most influential among these was the American Labor Party of New York. The

Progressive Party convention nominated Henry Wallace as its candidate for President, and Senator Glen Taylor (Dem., Idaho) for Vice-President. The party then launched its campaign for their election.

The Communist Party took an active part in the campaign. Its election platform said: "The new Progressive Party is an inescapable historic necessity for millions who want a real choice now between peace and war, democracy and fascism, security and poverty."¹ Further, it defined the attitude of Communists to the Progressive Party: "In 1944 we Communists supported Roosevelt to help win the anti-Axis war. Similarly, in 1948 we Communists join with millions of other Americans to support the Progressive Party ticket to help win the peace."²

Unlike the La Follette movement, the Progressive Party of 1948 did not reject the Communists' cooperation, regarding their participation as necessary for consolidating the democratic forces. The Communists in turn declared that they would support the anti-monopoly program of the new party and help it to create a mass popular base in a drive for a united front.

With the exception of a few liberal newspapers, a number of labor weeklies and the Communist press, the American press came out against Wallace. Persecution now spread to rank-and-file supporters of the Progressive Party. Local authorities did everything to prevent Wallace from holding pre-election meetings.

The election campaign was stormy. The Republican Party convention held in Philadelphia in June nominated New York Governor Thomas Dewey for President, and California Governor Earl Warren for Vice-President. Both had come out against Roosevelt's New Deal and, despite their social demagoguery, were enemies of the working class and the unions.

The Democratic Party held its national convention in July in the same city. It nominated Harry Truman for President, and Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky for Vice-President. The party enjoyed the support of AFL and CIO unions, which in

¹ *Political Affairs*, September 1948, p. 943.

² *Ibid.*

many ways strengthened its positions in the election. However, the Democrats were not confident of winning in 1948. They realized that they had antagonized labor by their departure from Roosevelt's New Deal policies and taking part in the passage of the Taft-Hartley bill. Moreover, the Railroad Brotherhoods and the United Mine Workers had promised to do everything possible to defeat Truman because of his anti-labor policy.

As before, labor leaders made a show of pursuing an impartial non-partisan policy in the election. In fact, however, they sought to prevent the Progressive Party candidates from winning. They tried to persuade their memberships that Truman's statements could be trusted and he was the candidate to vote for. The leaders of the AFL, CIO and independent unions began bearing down on the progressive forces, levelling absurd accusations at them. The Communist press noted at the time that the CIO leaders regarded any movement to create a third party as a "Red plot" or "Communist conspiracy".¹ In January 1948, the CIO executive board came out against the Progressive Party and its presidential candidate. Rejecting Wallace, the CIO supported Truman, recommending him as a friend of the working class.

However, the CIO leadership encountered open opposition to its traditionally hostile line on the third-party issue. Manifesting themselves here were democratic traditions and the influence of progressive unions, whose presidents, as members of the CIO executive board, spoke out in favor of the Progressive Party. At the same time, the new party's supporters in the electrical workers' union organized a Labor Committee for Wallace and Taylor, headed by Albert Fitzgerald, the union's leader. Progressive-minded people from a number of AFL, CIO and professional organizations affiliated themselves with the committee, which rendered great assistance to the party in the Wallace-Taylor campaign. Many delegates from the union took part in the Progressive Party's conventions.

In 1948, the party succeeded in entering its candidates on the ballot in the states and in the general election. As spokesmen for the liberal intellectuals of the nation, Wallace

¹ *Ibid.*, March 1948, p. 208.

and Taylor condemned the policy of repression pursued by the Democratic Party after the war. Wallace criticized the Democratic platform from the positions of Roosevelt's New Deal, remaining, on the whole, within the framework of bourgeois liberalism.

At the same time, the Progressive Party as a whole turned out to be somewhat to the left of its leader in that it called for the nationalization of certain industries. Some of the party's declarations were more radical than Wallace would have wished. However, the principles proclaimed by the Progressive Party failed to reach the broad masses of voters. Nor did the idea of creating a third party find support among organized workers, whose leaders did everything to keep them under the influence of the Democratic Party.

The 1948 elections once again showed that the majority of the voters were for the Democrats. Truman won 24.1 million popular votes. The Republican candidate, although defeated, still managed to draw 21.9 million votes. The Progressive Party polled 1.1 million votes. Truman regained the presidency for a second term.

The Progressive Party went into rapid decline soon after its failure at the polls. Disagreements grew stronger between Wallace and others in the leadership over what course the party should take and how it should operate, thus complicating the problem of party unity. The party's enemies made wide use of this fact, saying that Communists had "infiltrated" the leadership and now controlled the party. Wallace proved to be incapable of heading a broad third-party movement. Wide popular support of the Progressive Party could be won only through active struggle, and Wallace was unable to take this course. A bourgeois liberal, he was always vacillating, unable to make a break with the bourgeois two-party system.

Although the Progressive Party was to remain in existence until the mid-1950s, the high point in its activity was now past. Its subsequent activity had some significance in the peace movement, but its influence continued to fall.

The 15th convention of the Communist Party made an assessment of the situation within the Progressive Party and concluded that the main reason for the failure of the Wallace movement was its lack of a solid, working-class base. This

shortcoming was due to the fact that the working class was not adequately prepared to accept the message of the party, and was also the result of the perfidious policy of the right-wing labor officials "and the inability of the Left to expose and unmask these propagators of the 'lesser evil' theory";¹ that is, the idea that labor should back Truman in the 1948 election. The Communist Party also took a critical view of its own position in 1948, in particular the assessment of political sentiments made by its 14th convention. It was the opinion of that convention that the voter masses were dissatisfied with the two-party system and showed a readiness to break with it and support the idea of founding a third party. The Communist Party now recognized this assessment as being wrong. A resolution of the 15th convention, held in December 1950, said: "In fact, the 14th National Convention's estimate of the tempo with which such a political realignment was taking place has not been borne out by events.... In fact, at this date, there are no visible signs of a mass breakaway from the two old parties, although there are ample signs of a growing disgust with both major parties."²

As for the conservative labor leaders, they hailed Truman's victory. The President, in turn, had every reason to be grateful to the leadership of the American labor unions for their support.

The results of the 1948 elections once again confirmed the correctness of Lenin's statement that the two-party system in the United States "has been one of the most powerful means of preventing the rise of an independent working-class, i.e., genuinely socialist, party".³

The period beginning in 1947-1948 was characterized by increasing anti-communist propaganda and persecution of progressive Americans for their political beliefs. The ruling circles felt that the legislative measures taken so far were not enough to shield the broad masses of working people from the influence of progressive forces.

The administration and Congress were now contemplating

¹ *Political Affairs*, January 1951, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 403.

the destruction of the Communist Party and, under this pretext, a number of other progressive working-class organizations as well. Behind a whole series of repressive actions there was a plot not only against radically-minded workers and intellectuals, but against certain principles of bourgeois democracy which the power elite felt were a hindrance to the further strengthening of the positions of big capital. Not only reactionary organizations like the American Legion, but government bodies and agencies whipped up the anti-Communist hysteria. Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation J. Edgar Hoover said at an American Legion convention in October 1946 that the Communists had penetrated everywhere and that the nation faced the danger of some diabolic Communist plot. Chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities George P. Thomas said: "We must face the fact that Communism has been operating under favorable conditions in the United States for the past decade.... Our job for the next two years shall be to rout them out."¹

The US Chamber of Commerce published a number of pamphlets carrying sensational titles calling for a cold war within the country. All this propaganda was designed to justify anti-labor legislation.

The right-wing labor leaders looked upon this reactionary activity as helpful to them in their struggle with the left wing. The anti-Communist trend was always strong in the AFL leadership. In the CIO, the struggle between the two trends sharpened in the cold war situation, and anti-Communist actions began to increase in frequency. This happened even in the steelworkers' union, which Murray himself headed, and in a number of other unions. In the electrical workers' union, for example, an opposition group was formed, calling itself a front for democracy. During this period, James Carey's position changed markedly; he increasingly repudiated his past activity and joined a group that sought to establish a dictatorial regime in the union. Fierce attacks against the Communists increased in many other CIO organizations as well.

The Communists now faced years of ordeal and persecution. Police surveillance of many of the party leaders was inten-

¹ *The New York Times*, November 27, 1946.

sified. Office and home phones were tapped, and informers operated everywhere in the primary organizations, their reports on the state of affairs in the party flowing into the Department of Justice and the FBI on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C.

In April 1947, Eugene Dennis was summoned to testify before the Un-American Activities Committee, but he refused to do so on the ground that the committee was illegal, because Senator Rankin of Mississippi who was on the committee had been elected



Eugene Dennis, General Secretary of the Communist Party USA, 1948

in an election in which Negroes were not allowed to vote. He was convicted of "contempt of Congress", sentenced to one year in jail and released on bail pending appeal.

On July 20, 1948, when the party was preparing to hold its 14th national convention, twelve members of the National Board, headed by William Foster, were arrested and indicted for violation of the Smith Act. They were charged with belonging to the Communist Party, which, the indictment said, taught and advocated the overthrow and destruction of the Government of the United States by force and violence. The trial was set for January 1949, and the arrested leaders were released temporarily on bail, whereupon they began to prepare for their trial defense and simultaneously continued to prepare for the coming party convention.

A new wave of hostile actions against the party followed. Above all, new anti-Communist bills were being drafted in Congress. The first step in this direction were long and stormy congressional debates on a bill introduced by Karl Mundt (Rep., South Dakota) and Richard Nixon (Rep., California).

The aim of the debates was to feel out public opinion and intimidate the progressive forces.

It was in this complicated political situation that the 14th national convention of the Communist Party opened on August 2, 1948. Prior to the opening of the convention, a mass meeting was held in Madison Square Garden, at which William Foster, Eugene Dennis, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Henry Winston and other party leaders spoke. The convention discussed Dennis' report on the fascist danger. An analysis of the political situation in the country was made, and the tasks of the party were outlined in this report and in other speeches at the convention. The convention elected a thirteen-member National Board. William Foster was again elected national chairman, and Eugene Dennis general secretary. At the final meeting, the convention adopted the party platform for the forthcoming elections and rejected Browder's request for reinstatement in the party.

On January 17, 1949, the trial of eleven Communist Party leaders began in New York's Foley Square. The judge was Harold Medina, well known for his reactionary views. This man's past spoke for itself. Art Shields, an American Communist journalist, wrote on the basis of his study of court records that Medina had obtained over one hundred court orders evicting impoverished tenants from houses he owned in the slums of Manhattan's East Side in New York.

The trial was a farce from the outset. To sway the jury, for example, Medina quoted passages from the writings of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, in crude attempts to somehow support with them the charges in the indictment.

Using the false testimony of spies and informers, Medina went out of his way to give the trial the semblance of legality. But with every passing day he became increasingly short-tempered, resorting to threats and repression, throwing his political foes into jail one after another for contempt of court.

Handling their own defense, the leaders of the American Communist Party convincingly refuted all the charges against them. They were not only defending themselves, but, facts in hand, exposed the criminal actions of the power élite. Despite the efforts of the trial's organizers to show the defendants as conspirators or some sort of ominous agents of "international

communism", the Communist leaders stood out as genuine fighters for democracy and social progress.

During the trial protest meetings were held in New York, Chicago and San Francisco. Progressive CIO unions, the American Labor Party of New York and a number of democratic organizations of intellectuals joined in the public outcry. More than a hundred eminent labor and public figures, scientists and legal experts published a statement addressed to the Attorney General demanding an end to the persecution of the Communist Party leaders. About 20,000 people gathered for a mass meeting in New York on March 4, 1949. An appeal to President Truman was adopted there, urging that the charges against the Communist leaders be dropped. The American Labor Party requested the House Judiciary Committee to bring Medina to trial for violating the Constitution during the trial.

However, the movement in defense of the CP was not strong enough to influence the course of the trial. The jury found them guilty, and on October 21, 1949, Judge Medina sentenced each of ten leaders of the party to five years in jail and a fine of \$10,000, and the eleventh, Robert G. Thompson, to three years in jail and the same fine. William Z. Foster's case was postponed due to the state of his health.

The trial at Foley Square pursued the aim of rendering the Communist Party leaderless, scaring the Communists and forcing them to quit the party. The organizers of the trial sought to totally discredit the party, isolate it from the masses, and set the stage for destroying it. The results of the trial and developments within the party after the trial showed that the reactionary forces were partially successful in achieving their goal. The trial and the verdict sharply worsened the position of the party and weakened the leadership of its local organizations. Membership dropped and the party's isolation from the broad masses increased.

A large part of the working class remained passive and refrained from joining the movement in defense of the CP leaders. The strong influence of bourgeois ideology, the policy of intimidation and repression, the anti-Communist propaganda, and the hostile position of union officialdom all had their effect.

But even so, in the eyes of world public opinion, the New York trial of the Communist Party leaders appeared as a glaring violation of the principles of bourgeois democracy and the American Constitution.

Confident that it could act with impunity, the Truman Administration went even further. As the CP worked for a reversal of the verdict, appealing the case right up to the Supreme Court, arrests of leaders of its local organizations continued. The party found itself in a more and more difficult position. It spent the greater part of its energies and funds on defending its right to exist as a political party.

Trials began in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Baltimore, San Francisco and other cities. The court examination in Pittsburgh, the center of the steel industry, lasted nine months. On trial there were the prominent party workers Steve Nelson and James Dolson.

Using provocateurs, the reactionary forces attacked the party organization of the state of Maryland, where its leader, G. Meyers, was brought to trial and an effort was made to make him testify against his party comrades.

The attacks against the Communist Party pursued far-reaching aims. Despite their small numbers, the Communists were the vanguard of the working class, its most progressive part, so when the reactionary forces launched their struggle against all democratic organizations, they decided to deal the first blow to the Communist Party. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn said that "the suppression of the Communist Party is the first step in the suppression of all people's organizations and democratic rights".¹

Indeed, it was not long before a tidal wave of repression came thundering down upon progressive unionists and democratically-minded representatives of the arts and sciences. Persecution of union leaders took place simultaneously with rigged trials of scientists, Hollywood actors, writers and journalists.

The cold war and political reaction caused increasing tension within the CIO. The persecution of progressive forces and

¹ *Daily Worker*, April 23, 1955.

anti-communism were the main reasons for a serious aggravation of the struggle between the two main currents within this association. The democratic current was represented by eleven unions which held progressive views on a number of important labor issues.

Bourgeois propaganda spread all sorts of fabrications about this group of unions, saying, for example, that it included "Red conspirators", "subversive elements" and "Communists" who were plotting to overthrow the government. As George Morris wrote later, "the aim was clear: to force a split inside the CIO and to break up the coalition of left and so-called 'center'".¹

The progressive unions kept a close watch on the debates in Congress and exposed the anti-labor character of the legislation being prepared there. They played a big role in the protest movement against the Smith, Bolle, Case, Truman and other bills, and waged an especially vigorous battle against the Taft-Hartley Act, exposing its undemocratic essence.

The progressive unions cooperated with the trade union organizations in the World Federation of Trade Unions. In the difficult conditions of the cold war, the Fur and Leather Workers, the Food, Tobacco and Agricultural Workers, the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers, the Transport Workers, the longshoremen's and the maritime workers' unions maintained contacts with Soviet trade unions.

An important event in the struggle of the progressive forces in the United States was the National Union Peace Conference, held in Chicago in early October 1949, with 1,200 delegates from 28 states attending. Among the delegates were representatives of some of the major unions, including the United Steelworkers, the United Electrical and Radio Workers, the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers, and the West Coast maritime and longshoremen's unions. They demanded an end to the cold war policy. The conference also condemned the North Atlantic Pact and the arms race. The proceedings ended with the election of a national committee and an executive committee.

However, due to the resistance put up by the right-wing

¹ George Morris, *American Labor: Which Way?*, New York, 1961, p. 55.

labor leaders and the trade union machinery which they controlled, the peace movement among labor did not become widespread.

The CIO leadership sought to suppress opposition at any cost. There was no such opposition in the AFL, and the leaders there had no difficulty in adopting whatever decisions they wanted. Thus, in its report to the 66th AFL convention in 1947 in San Francisco, the AFL executive council expressed dissatisfaction with the government's position directed toward cooperation with the USSR during the war.¹ That convention was vivid confirmation of the fact that the right-wing AFL leadership, meeting no resistance within the Federation, could support any steps taken by the ruling circles in both domestic and foreign policy. It gave its full approval to the Marshall Plan, particularly on questions relating to international ties. The Marshall Plan, a convention report said, was something for which "American business as well as American Labor must sacrifice".²

The CIO held its 10th constitutional convention in the autumn of 1948. During the debate on Murray's report, an opposition composed of 50 delegates, representing progressive unions with an aggregate membership of over one million, came out against blanket approval of the Truman Administration's foreign policy, the Marshall Plan included. The opposition submitted a minority report. This report rejected the Marshall Plan, which, it said, pursued the aim of continuing the cold war against the Soviet Union and did not help to strengthen postwar peace.

The same minority submitted a draft resolution on another issue discussed at the convention, namely, the attitude to be taken by the CIO to the World Federation of Trade Unions. Murray and his supporters succeeded in getting the 10th CIO convention to pass a resolution approving the splitting actions of CIO representatives in the WFTU. The convention authorized the CIO executive board and executive officers "to take whatever action in relation to the WFTU and the international labor movement as will best accomplish CIO

¹ *AFL, Proceedings*, 1947, pp. 176-77.

² *Ibid.*, p. 464.

policies and objectives".¹ The objectives that the CIO leaders had in mind soon became clear: to bring the WFTU into line or, if this did not succeed, to withdraw from it and, together with the AFL, create a new international trade union association with different policies.

The progressive unions declined to support plans of this nature. They felt that the main task was to achieve labor unity, and this could be accomplished only by combining rather than disuniting labor's forces. However great the differences might have been, they could be overcome through patient discussion and a mutual search for ways of coming closer together. A resolution submitted by the minority said that "it is possible for working people through their unions to find grounds for common action and mutual cooperation".² Further, it proposed that it be resolved "that this Convention reaffirms our support and participation in WFTU and for further strengthening it, urging that CIO representatives in WFTU seek out all issues on which there can be cooperation, and maintaining the autonomous rights of each national labor center".³

This resolution failed to pass. Instead, the resolution submitted by the executive board was adopted by a 600-vote majority. Differences over the question of attitude to the WFTU and the international labor movement grew as the CIO leaders continued to fan the conflict within the WFTU and to intensify their splitting policy in the European trade union movement. The ideological crisis in the CIO was aggravated by the support the leadership gave the Truman Administration's entire foreign policy.

Shortly after the convention there was a meeting of the CIO executive board, during which a sharp debate flared up again over the Marshall Plan issue. A resolution adopted said that the CIO was determined to continue its cooperation with the US government in the matter of securing international peace and implementing the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan was described as an instrument of peace. But the group of

¹ *The CIO News*, January 24, 1949.

² *Daily Proceedings of the Tenth Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, Portland, Oregon, November 24, 1948, p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*

progressive unions disagreed with the resolution. Thirty-three members of the executive board voted for and eleven against the resolution. The latter were in the opposition on one of the most important foreign policy issues of that period.

When the North Atlantic Pact was signed in May 1949, it too was approved by the CIO executive board, which thereupon urged its unions to follow suit. Appearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, James Carey said that the CIO supported the pact because it was "purely defensive in character" and because it was "the answer to fears of aggression in Europe".¹

The contradictions within the CIO increased from convention to convention.

Over the years, disagreement arose on the question of trade union democracy and the rights of unions. For a long time the CIO differed from the AFL in that its unions enjoyed autonomy not only in the economic but also the political field. This accounted for the progressive development of the CIO and the activeness and initiative of its rank and file. The energy of the workers in the 1930s and during the war was displayed due to the political autonomy of the local organizations. But then came the postwar period, a period of intensified reaction, anti-labor repression, and witch hunts—the persecution of the Communist Party and left-wing democratic elements.

In this period, new tendencies appeared in the CIO. The top leaders of the organization and its leading unions veered sharply to the right and embarked on a course toward alliance with the reactionary upper clique of the AFL. They came out in support of anti-communism and the aggressive foreign policy of the ruling circles of the country.

Seeking greater control, the CIO top leaders headed by Murray increasingly demanded curtailment of the unions' autonomy in political affairs. The CIO executive board barred the unions from involvement in policy-making, declaring this field to be its prerogative. It censured any attempt by the unions to express their judgement on any aspect of the CIO's political line or on the domestic or foreign policy of the USA,

¹ *The CIO News*, May 9, 1949.

recognizing their right to make decisions only in the field of economic and practical activities.

After laying the necessary groundwork and consolidating their forces, the right-wing leaders of the CIO delivered something like an ultimatum to the progressive unions: either submit to central rule and stop engaging in politics, or quit the CIO.

What followed was a period of unprecedented baiting of leftists and Communists. Conferences, meetings and board sessions were held in New York and California, Connecticut and Illinois, Michigan and Ohio. The struggle intensified. The right-centrists aimed their fire against Communist and progressive figures in the eleven unions, disparaging them, labelling them "Reds" and "agents of Moscow", and threatening them with expulsion from the CIO. In May 1949, the executive board banned Communists from holding official posts in the unions and from membership on the CIO executive board.¹ It demanded the resignation of officers who did not agree with its decisions. Harry Bridges was removed from his post as head of the CIO organization in California.

Bridges was the first victim. The right-wing leadership had to reckon with the standing of this prominent labor leader. It had made repeated efforts to bring him over to its side, but to no avail.

The baiting of the progressive forces in the CIO reached a high point at the 11th convention in late 1949. The electrical workers' union was subjected to particularly crude attacks because there were strong progressive sentiments within it and quite a few Communists in its membership. The union was famous for its irreconcilable stand with respect to US foreign policy. A convention resolution said: "We can no longer tolerate within the family of CIO the Communist Party masquerading as a labor union."² The resolution slandered progressive unionists, accusing them of all sorts of sins. These attacks were backed by nothing but false assertions to the effect that the Communists by criticizing the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Pact, were betraying the interests of American workers. A glaring absurdity was the assertion that the

¹ See *CIO, Proceedings*, 1949, p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, p. 302.

electrical workers had joined with Wall Street and other reactionary forces to crush liberalism and democracy in the United States.¹

In an atmosphere of anti-Communist hysteria, the right-wing leaders of the CIO pushed through an amendment to the CIO constitution, authorizing the executive board to expel from the CIO any labor leader or union on the ground that their policy and activity was systematically aimed at carrying out the program or tasks of the Communist Party or other organization rather than achieving the aims set forth in the constitution of the CIO.

When this resolution was adopted—thus testifying to the CIO's conclusive shift to reactionary positions—Philip Murray declared that “there is no room within the CIO for communism.”² Three years earlier, at a convention of the steelworkers' union, Murray had said: “We will not permit any limitation on the freedom and democratic right of full discussion of trade union problems in our own ranks.

“We must not and do not seek interference with the free and democratic right of each member to practise such religion as he chooses in his private life as a citizen. Our union has not been and will not be an instrument of repression. It is a vehicle for economic and social progress.”³ But now Murray himself took the road of repression against unionists who reflected the real interests of the working class.

But it was not just Murray who was involved. Whatever tactical turns he may have made in making temporary agreements with the left, he was only one of many conservative leaders of the Gompers school reared in the social conditions of capitalism and imbued with the spirit of political opportunism. It was this clique that precipitated the political crisis in the CIO and organized the baiting of a large group of progressive unions with a total membership of over a million workers. The legal basis, as it were, for expelling the progressive unions from the CIO was laid at the 11th convention.

¹ *CIO, Proceedings*, 1949, p. 303.

² *Ibid.*, p. 327.

³ *Fur and Leather Workers*, February 1949, p. 16.

Criticizing the amendment to the CIO constitution that was proposed at the convention, Bridges said that it put an end to real democracy in the CIO.¹ He also condemned the anti-Communist attacks.

History was repeating itself, showing a remarkable resemblance to events in the mid-1930s when the AFL leaders were in the process of expelling the future CIO unions from their ranks. Now, however, the Greens and the Wolls in the AFL played the role of inciters, while their counterparts in the CIO, the Murrays and the Haywoods, were actually doing the same things that thirteen years earlier their former enemies had done. It was on this platform that rapprochement of the leaders of the two labor centers was taking place. One of the conditions for the forthcoming merger of the AFL and CIO was in the making.

The CIO leaders were now waiting for the right moment to deal the final blow to the progressive unions. It came in December 1949.

Late 1949 was marked by a vigorous onslaught of reactionaries. It was then that the trial of the Communist Party leaders ended, new provocations against Communists began, and a mass signing of non-Communist affidavits by union officials was organized. Disoriented by the anti-Communist hysteria, the Taft-Hartley Act, police repression, and dismissals, the working class on the whole remained on the sidelines during the reactionary persecution of the Communist Party. In the same way it passively accepted the CIO's withdrawal from the WFTU and the worsening of relations with Soviet trade unions.

It was at this time that the CIO leadership decided to carry out its threat to expel the progressive unions. In November 1949, the 11th convention of the CIO in Cleveland passed a resolution to expel the Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers, and at the same time to charter another union with a similar name. The United Farm Equipment Workers union was also expelled. This was the answer of the right-wing leadership of the CIO to the legitimate intentions of that union to remain an independent labor organization and not submit to a forced

¹ See *CIO, Proceedings*, 1949.

merger with the United Auto Workers. The convention did not stop at this resolution. It instructed the executive board to examine the cases against the other progressive unions. The executive board set up a special committee to prepare materials which would help it to take the decision to expel them. In December 1949, the committee investigated the case of the CIO State Labor Council (Cal.).

Such was the conclusion of the campaign against progressive forces within US labor, which had lasted for several years.

After the end of World War II, the American working class encountered new difficulties, most of which were connected with post war reconversion and the monopolies' encroachment on the political rights and living standards of the workers. As a consequence, there was an intensification of the class struggle, which manifested itself above all in an upsurge of the strike movement. With the aim of suppressing strikes and blocking the progressive forces, the ruling circles made a sharp turn away from Roosevelt's policy of bourgeois liberalism. Anti-communism, anti-labor legislation, the cold war against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries—all this indicated that a prolonged period of political reaction had set in.

The general intensification of reaction in turn helped strengthen the positions of the right-wing elements in the labor movement, and weakened the influence of the left forces, as was clearly manifested in the changes that took place in the CIO at the close of the 1940s.

CHAPTER IX

INTERNATIONAL POLICIES OF US LABOR UNIONS, 1945-1949

The international situation after the victory over fascism, and the new correlation of forces in the world created favorable opportunities for the working class to achieve unity. Between 1944 and 1947, the bourgeoisie of France, Italy, Belgium and other countries in Europe was forced to share power with the Communist parties. Communists were included in the governments of twelve capitalist countries. They worked to democratize the political system and bring about radical social and economic reforms. In this they scored considerable successes, among them the adoption of a democratic constitution in Italy, the nationalization of certain industries in France, and the enactment of a number of laws in these countries in the interests of the working people. During this period, the working class made great strides toward unity.

The bourgeoisie could not reconcile itself to the new developments in the international labor movement. From the outset it tried to take away from the working people the fruits of their victory over fascism, and assiduously prepared for a decisive battle to maintain its dominance. Weakened and discredited during the war, the European bourgeoisie counted heavily on the ruling circles of the USA to help it carry out its postwar plans. US support consisted not only of the presence of Anglo-American troops in Europe, but also of broad financial aid given to the governments of a number of countries. The imperialist circles of the United States did not conceal their aspirations to world dominance. The main thrust of this course was directed against the Soviet Union and the

international labor and Communist movement, whose enhanced influence and prestige were becoming more and more of an obstacle to the plans of the American imperialists. In the struggle against these forces, the imperialists found themselves some ready allies: the rightist labor leaders. It was with their help that the State Department sought to turn US labor unions "into servile instruments of Government war policies".¹

The American labor leaders willingly cooperated with the ruling circles. Lenin in his time stressed that "the idea of class collaboration is opportunism's main feature. The war [World War I—*Ed.*] has brought this idea to its logical conclusion, and has augmented its usual factors and stimuli with a number of extraordinary ones; through the operation of special threats and coercion it has compelled the philistine and disunited masses to collaborate with the bourgeoisie."²

In the conditions of the cold war, the opportunist theory and practice of class collaboration logically put the American trade union leaders into the same camp with the most aggressive representatives of monopoly capital. Their common ideology and objectives in the struggle against the left forces in the labor movement formed the basis on which they combined their efforts.

The American rightist labor leaders sought to exploit the prejudices against the Soviet Union and communism which they themselves had been implanting in the working class for many decades. In their pro-imperialist propaganda they spread fabrications that the Soviet Union had aggressive intentions and aspired to world dominance. Characterizing the policies of the American labor leaders, Foster wrote: "These labor imperialists are now busily peddling to the workers the monstrous falsehood that the United States is being attacked by an aggressive Soviet Union; they are ardent champions, too, of the criminal absurdity that the monopoly-dominated Truman government with its fascist allies is fighting everywhere to defend world democracy."³

The impact of war propaganda on the more backward

¹ *Political Affairs*, December 1952, p. 44.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 242.

³ *Masses and Mainstream*, No. 5, New York, July 1948, p. 25.

sections of the working class was increased also by the passiveness of the American working class in questions of foreign policy. This passiveness had been cultivated by the reactionary labor bureaucrats from the AFL over many decades. At the same time, however, they themselves were very active in the international arena.

Representatives of business and political circles noted with satisfaction the wide possibilities that the use of trade union leaders in the diplomatic field afforded them. Eric Johnston, a big industrialist and formerly president of the US Chamber of Commerce, wrote that "American labor leaders should be US ambassadors because when they talk about our democracy to folks abroad, they are likely to be believed".¹ At the 10th convention of the CIO, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas spoke with alarm about the fact that many in Europe were distrustful of American policies and were afraid that their countries would become dependent upon the United States. But American labor, he said, carried good credentials to Western Europe. In this connection, he expressed the hope that "door tightly closed to all others may open at its knock".²

With the proclamation of the Marshall Plan, the labor leaders offered their services to the American government. The President included them in committees set up to work out and implement the plan. James Carey, for example, was very active on William Averell Harriman's committee, which was engaged in drafting the law that would put the Marshall Plan into effect.

The anti-Communist orientation of the Marshall Plan suited the conservative US labor leaders. They deluded themselves and the workers with the hope that this program would help overcome the internal difficulties of American capitalism. They also considered it their job to promote the plan abroad and to convince the workers of Europe and the whole world that the United States was offering disinterested aid. Said Carey: "Because of their closeness to the people, American labor leaders have been more helpful in getting popular support for the Marshall Plan than all the crumpet eating,

¹ *The CIO News*, September 27, 1948.

² *Daily Proceedings of the Tenth Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, p. 16.

tea-drinking diplomats."¹ Green seconded this statement when he assured the government that "the American Federation of Labor has an indispensable service to perform. The wage-earners of this country can convince the wage-earners of Europe that our government does not seek power over their lives or want to possess their lands."² As they went about the business of trying to convince European workers that the United States was offering disinterested aid, the rightist labor leaders themselves regarded this aid above all as a means of fighting communism.

To facilitate the propaganda work of the union leaders, special posts for "labor representatives" were established in the machinery set up to administer the Marshall Plan. On April 3, 1948, a twelve-member Public Advisory Board was created within the Marshall Plan administration.³ Sitting on this board side by side with representatives of capital were George Meany from the AFL, James Carey from the CIO, and A. E. Lyon from the Railroad Brotherhoods. Bert M. Jewell, formerly head of the Railway Employees Department of the AFL, and Clinton S. Golden from the CIO were labor advisors in the Washington-based US Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), headed by Paul Gray Hoffman, a big industrialist.

Union officers were also appointed to serve as labor advisers in the European coordinating body, headed by Harriman, with headquarters in Paris. At first, the ruling circles preferred to use people from the AFL in the various committees established to carry out the Marshall Plan. But they could not completely ignore the CIO, and consequently CIO representatives were included in the ECA Advisory Board. However, in selecting people for the job of promoting the American "economic assistance" plan among European workers, preference was most often given to people from the AFL, since the leaders of the Federation had long had closer ties with the government apparatus than did the CIO leadership. The reason was that for a whole decade CIO policy had been largely determined by

¹ *The CIO News*, March 7, 1948.

² *The American Federationist*, February 1948, p. 17.

³ Foreign Assistance Act of 1948 (Public Law 472, 80th Congress, 2d Session), Section 107 (a), *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. X, 1948, Bristol, 1950, pp. 195, 200.

progressive elements. This made the ruling circles distrustful of the CIO, particularly since it was still a member of the World Federation of Trade Unions, and the latter had condemned the Marshall Plan as a scheme for the economic enslavement of Europe. Conferring with the AFL executive council in June 1948, Paul Gray Hoffman, head of the ECA, was told that "no posts in ECA should be allotted to the CIO so long as the latter group remained a part of the anti-Marshall Plan, Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions".¹

With the aim of organizing publicity for the Marshall Plan among European workers, Murray and Carey sent Harry Martin, president of the American Newspaper Guild, to Europe in June 1948. In August, Martin was appointed director of the Office of Public European Information, European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan), in Paris. His men travelled to the big European countries, where they created a network of information agencies. A great deal of work was also done by missions sent to various countries. In February 1949, it was decided to send three representatives of the labor press on such a trip. Their tasks included holding talks with trade union officials and publishers of labor newspapers with the aim of improving publicity for the Marshall Plan.

The zeal of the top labor leaders received plaudits from government officials and representatives of American monopoly capital. Hoffman declared at one point that "since the beginning of the European Recovery Program no group in the United States has given it more wholehearted support, has worked harder for it, or understood it better than the labor organizations of America".² On the other hand, Averell Harriman described trade unionists in Europe as men "who have come forward not only to support, but also to further actively the Marshall Plan".³

However, the ruling circles could not achieve their ultimate objectives by propaganda alone. The bourgeoisie's arsenal also included such tested weapons as bribery and divisive tactics.

¹ *The American Federationist*, June 1948, p. 3.

² *The CIO News*, September 6, 1948.

³ *Ibid.*, January 10, 1949.

Congress and the administration did not stint when it came to fighting progressive forces in other countries. The Marshall Plan administration had sufficient funds and plenty of opportunities for using them against opposition. The conservative labor leaders of the USA who had harnessed themselves to the foreign policy wagon of American imperialism could not now stop half-way; they not only continued their propaganda work, but also embarked on subversive activity in the labor movements of other countries.

The AFL leaders began to pay close attention to France in the very first postwar years. At the AFL convention in 1946, Irving Brown said: "I think that France is the most important problem that the American government faces, and that the American labor movement faces.... I say the Communist danger in France is not over."¹ The turn toward cold war against the countries of socialism had already begun, and Brown felt that under these circumstances France was the key to Europe. The labor movement in France was on the upswing: the political activity of the working class had grown sharply, jeopardizing the plans of the American imperialists. Under the cover of pronouncements about saving France from communism, the AFL trade union leaders began their subversive work in the French labor movement.

They found willing accomplices in France, namely, the leaders of the Socialist Party of France (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière) and trade union figures grouped around the weekly *Force ouvrière*. The Force Ouvrière group, which maintained close ties with SFIO, belonged to the General Confederation of Labor (Confédération Générale du Travail) of France, which had been revived during the war, and the group's leader, Léon Jouhaux, was CGT secretary. At the AFL convention in 1946, Irving Brown called him "a free trade unionist and old friend of ours".²

During the war, labor figures of this type had cooperated with the Communists, but their views on fundamental questions of class struggle did not change. With the end of the

¹ AFL, *Proceedings*, 1946, p. 438.

² *Ibid.*

struggle against fascism they reverted to a policy hostile to the Communists.

Irving Brown showed up in France again in early 1947. By that time the Socialist Party had set up a special Trade Union Bureau, which, with the help of Brown and the leaders of Force Ouvrière, was now promoting the creation of so-called autonomous trade unions outside the CGT and opposition groups within the CGT unions.

But these plans did not work out. The workers met the idea of such organizations with suspicion. The enemies of unity decided to change their tactics, especially now that the Marshall Plan had appeared and reaction had gone over to the offensive. In May 1947, the reactionaries succeeded in ousting the Communists from the French government. In an effort to isolate the Communists from the working class, the right-wing Socialists and reformist trade union leaders now actually steered a course toward splitting it.

In October 1947, at the initiative of Secretary of State Marshall, a meeting of AFL leaders and representatives of reformist groups in Europe was held. The French were represented by Jouhaux. The participants sought ways and means of overcoming opposition to the Marshall Plan on the part of the working people of Europe. Attention was still focussed primarily on France. As reported in the press, Brown's project of setting up autonomous unions was criticized. It had cost too much and produced no tangible results.¹ It was decided to begin "combating communism" within the CGT itself.

The splitters decided to use the Marshall Plan to achieve their purpose. If they could get the CGT to approve the plan this would make it possible to change the policy of the organization and to isolate the Communists in it. After his return from the USA, Jouhaux voiced his approval of the American "aid" plan. On November 12, 1947, at a meeting of the Comité Confédéral National of the CGT, Jouhaux's group tried to push through a resolution approving the Marshall Plan.

The National Committee of the CGT, however, was not

¹ See *La Vie ouvrière*, November 19, 1947.

taken in by Jouhaux's talk about the USA's "disinterestedness". It rejected his resolution by a vote of 857 to 127, and denounced the aims pursued by the American imperialists.¹ But the reformist leaders did not give up; they merely changed their tactics. Playing up the slogan of "trade union independence of political parties" they now declared that the trade unions should not engage in politics.

At the same meeting, Jouhaux demanded the return of the trade unions to "pure syndicalism". Who was directing and financing Jouhaux and his group was clear to everyone present. Committee members cited many facts pointing to the connections the splitters had not only with the right-wing Socialists and the government, but also with AFL agents operating in Europe and trying to bribe trade union functionaries.² By that time Jouhaux's group had already received \$5,000 from the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and \$25,000 from the AFL.³

In November 1947, a general strike in France demonstrated the strength of the working class and its high level of political awareness. During the struggle it became even clearer that the hopes of the reformists to isolate the Communists and undermine the influence of the CGT in the working class were futile. But the reformist labor leaders stopped at nothing in their efforts to split the CGT and bring about the formation of a new organization.

At the height of the strike struggle, John Foster Dulles came to Paris from London. On the eve of his arrival there he had spoken of the necessity of "eliminating the Communists from the political life of France", which was a direct call to intensify the anti-Communist hysteria. In Paris, Dulles met with de Gaulle, Schuman, Blum and, finally, with Jouhaux. Assessing the results of the talks, the progressive press reported: "Soon after Dulles left for London, where he helped bury the principle of reparations from Germany, Jouhaux launched the secessionist movement which today threatens to

¹ Val R. Lorwin, *The French Labor Movement*, Cambridge, 1954, p. 121.

² See *L'Humanité*, November 14, 1947.

³ Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*, p. 394.

split the French labor unions."¹ And Dulles himself, upon returning to the US, said: "Everything that is happening in France is incomparably more important than what is happening in London"² (where a conference of foreign ministers was taking place at the time). Soon Carey, too, hastened to Paris to the aid of the splitters. Following all these voyages, Jouhaux's group set about openly to split the Confederation.

On December 19, 1947, the Force Ouvrière group held a conference. On the same day, the leaders of this group, Leon Jouhaux, Robert Bothereau, Georges Delamarre and Pierre Neumeyer, who were all secretaries of the CGT, resigned from the CGT executive board.³ The Force Ouvrière group quit the CGT. Conservative leaders in the USA welcomed the news of the split. Brown was soon to write: "The great positive achievement on the democratic side was that on December 19 the *de facto* split in the CGT became a *de jure* reality."⁴ In the same article he outlined a program of aid to the splitters. It envisaged, in the first place, recognition of their group as a legal trade union organization and, in the second place, the rendering of financial and moral support to it.

Most of the CGT unions did not follow this group, so that its existence largely depended on material assistance from the government, the right-wing Socialists and the AFL. In return, the group was supposed to promote the Marshall Plan, and as early as January 17, 1948, the Force Ouvrière group published a "manifest on the Marshall Plan". On the next day, the newspaper *L'Humanité* asked: "Is not approval of the Marshall Plan the condition on which Irving Brown is donating \$1,000,000?"⁵

At a Force Ouvrière convention in Paris in April 1948, the splitters decided to form their own organization. But the organizations that went along with them and sent representatives to the convention were concerned about the sources of the Force Ouvrière's financial backing. The convention's organiz-

¹ *Daily Worker*, December 23, 1947.

² *L'Humanité*, May 13, 1948.

³ See Val R. Lorwin, *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

⁴ *The American Federationist*, January 1948, p. 17.

⁵ *L'Humanité*, January 18, 1948 (the AFL had allocated one million dollars for work in Europe).

ers had to make an accounting. In a report on the tasks of the Force Ouvrière, Bothereau admitted that 40 million francs had come from the government. Somewhat later, at a meeting of the AFL executive council in August 1948, Green announced that the council had authorized a loan to the Force Ouvrière and that the sum would probably be \$20,000 or \$25,000.¹

The creation of the splitting organization was greeted not only by the AFL leadership but by the rightist leaders of the CIO as well. On April 12, 1948, the CIO executive board sent a cable to Jouhaux expressing confidence that he, Jouhaux, was "continuing to strive for the traditional goals of good and free trade unionism".² In December 1948, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Force Ouvrière's withdrawal from the CGT, Murray wrote: "We offer you the gratitude of the free American labor movement for your struggle and your success in preserving a free labor movement in France.... We look forward to an ever closer and ever more fruitful collaboration of our unions and yours in the great recovery effort of the Marshall Plan."³

The split dealt a heavy blow to the labor movement of France, but those who engineered the intrigues found that it was fruitless to try to isolate the Communists and set the workers against them. The Communists continued to enjoy the working people's confidence. The reactionaries' hopes of destroying the CGT also collapsed. It was weakened by the split, but it did not cease its struggle against reaction.

In 1944, in the Italian trade union movement, the Communists, Socialists and Christian Democrats achieved unity. This immediately put American trade union figures on guard. The AFL leaders regarded unity with the Communists, wherever it might occur, as a blow aimed personally at them. Of course, the Italian bourgeoisie took an even more negative view of such unity; however, in the first postwar years, the balance of forces in the country was not favorable to the reactionaries, and they had to put up with the existence of a united trade union

¹ *The American Federationist*, September 1948, p. 3.

² *The CIO News*, April 19, 1948.

³ *Ibid.*, December 27, 1948.

movement. The situation changed in 1947. The ruling circles of Italy openly approved a course toward cold war, while reactionaries inside and outside the country united in a common effort to regain lost positions, take away the fruits of victory from the people, and isolate the Communist Party.

As early as in 1944, an AFL envoy, Luigi Antonini, secretary of Local 89 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, was sent to Italy. He took \$250,000 with him. The purpose of his trip, as the American Communists pointed out, was "(1) to break up the unity of the trade union movement which is made up of Socialists, Communists and Catholic workers; and (2) to destroy the united front of the Communists and Socialists".¹ The money was meant for those Italian trade union leaders who were ready to help Antonini impair the unity of the Italian working class.

The American labor leaders pinned great hopes on alliance with right-wing elements of the Italian Socialist Party (ISP). Although, on the whole, the ISP collaborated with the Communist Party during and after the war, the right-wing Socialists were even then against unity. It was with them that Antonini established contact in 1946. Shortly thereafter, in December 1946, the new US Ambassador to Italy, James Dunn, announced that his country was prepared to support those in the ISP and the unions who opposed communism.

The ISP held its 25th convention in January 1947. Among those present was one Angelica Balabanoff, who came as a representative of American trade unions. In addressing the convention, she read a letter that abounded in attacks against unity of actions of Socialists and Communists. It was this kind of support that encouraged the right-wing Socialists to split away and found a new party, the Italian Socialist Workers' Party.

It was no secret that the AFL leaders were involved in these developments. British Labour Party leader Harold Laski, for one, acknowledged in an article that the Americans had played a big role in the split of the Italian Socialist Party. The Americans never denied this fact. Speaking before members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in the

¹ *Daily Worker*, March 5, 1945.

United States, Antonini bluntly declared that the success so far achieved called for additional sums of money for further work in Italy.

Agreeing with Antonini's argument, the union leadership allocated \$150,000 for the purpose of "saving Italy". Dubinsky himself sent one of the leaders of the new party a letter explaining his union's position with respect to the new Socialist Party. Through a blunder committed by the addressee the contents of the letter became widely known.

Meanwhile, an offensive was launched against the unity of the trade union movement and against the Italian General Confederation of Labor where Communists, Catholics and Socialists collaborated. Both the Italian reactionaries and the US labor leaders were counting on support from the Catholic faction of the IGCL, but they were unable to get it at first because it was headed by advocates of unity, whose leader was Achille Grandi. But in early 1947, Giulio Pastore, a right-wing labor leader and rabid foe of unity with the Communists, became the Catholic leader in the IGCL. On the eve of the IGCL convention in June of that year in Florence, Pastore and his group launched an open struggle against the trade union policy of acting jointly with political parties, above all with the Communists.

In November 1947, Irving Brown listed the Pastore faction among the groups in the Italian labor movement which the AFL could count on to take part in the struggle against the Communists.¹ Dubinsky, too, spoke of the need to support it when, at the 66th convention of the AFL, he urged that active use be made of the Italian-American Labor Council that had been created in the United States in 1941. The support that the splitters of the Italian trade union movement received from their government and from Americans inspired them to more vigorous action. As was the case in France, it was the question of the Marshall Plan that served as the basis for their next move.

In March 1948, a conference of trade unions from the European countries that had accepted the Marshall Plan was held in London, sponsored and financed by the AFL. The

¹ See Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*, p. 360.

leaders of the IGCL declared that they were not against aid *per se*, but condemned the conditions on which it was offered.

Pastore, however, accepted the invitation to the London conference, saying before he left that he would seek an IGCL split if the majority did not change its attitude to the Marshall Plan. The AFL leadership urged other organizations and groups in Italy to take the same stance. So did the right-wing leaders of the CIO. When he was in Italy in 1948, Carey tried to dictate his conditions to the leadership of the IGCL. At one news conference he said that Communist leaders of the IGCL would have to support US policy or be removed from office. He said bluntly that the CIO was in the WFTU to combat Communism in the European labor movement.¹

From July 1948, a Marshall Plan administration mission operated in Italy. The labor adviser in it—an AFL representative—entered into close contact with the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party and the Catholic trade unions. The combined support of the Christian Democratic government and the Americans, their advice and financial aid, made it possible for the splitters to work against the unity of the Italian working people. Events unfolded rapidly. On July 14, 1948, the reactionaries organized an assassination attempt on the General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party, Palmiro Togliatti. The working people responded with a general strike embracing the entire country. The Pastore group felt that the moment was appropriate, and on July 15 demanded a halt to the strike on the ground that it was political in character. Just a few days after these events, Dubinsky went to Italy and held a series of talks with reformist labor leaders there.

On July 22, eleven Christian Democrats in the leadership of the IGCL opted for direct alliance with Catholic labor organizations outside the confederation. The split was now a fact. But the goal was not fully achieved because most of the Catholic unionists stayed in the IGCL at that time. This forced the splitters to delay the formation of a new organization for a while, and it was only in late 1948 that they finally founded it under the name of the Free General Confederation of Italian Workers.

¹ *Daily Worker*, June 11, 1948.

The events in France and Italy in the first postwar years were part of the general offensive against the democratic forces that the reactionaries had launched in 1947. The circumstances surrounding the split of the labor movements in the two European countries proved that there was a reactionary conspiracy against the unity of the international working class, and that not the least part in it was played by the right-wing labor leaders of the United States. The latter operated in other countries besides France and Italy, but the struggle against the CGT of France and IGCL in Italy was of special importance to them because these two organizations belonged to the WFTU and played an active role in it.

The leaders of the AFL and CIO began their maneuvers against the WFTU, which united about 70,000,000 workers, from its very inception. Both groups of leaders were frightened by the growth of the progressive forces in the international labor movement and were in no way pleased with the WFTU policies. The AFL leaders pursued a hostile line with respect to the WFTU and sought the creation of a new international organization. The rightist leaders of the CIO felt the same animosity to the WFTU, but at the same time they were afraid that the AFL would slam the door on them in any new organization. Therefore they tried to gain a dominant position within the WFTU with the idea of gradually changing its policies. However, they ran into serious difficulties both within the CIO itself, where the influence of the left forces was strong, and in the WFTU. For two years after the war, therefore, the CIO still cooperated with the WFTU on a number of issues. During that time the significance and contributions of the WFTU received praise in CIO executive board and convention documents. A resolution of the 9th convention of the CIO in October 1947, for example, said that "the WFTU has firmly established its position as the authoritative spokesman for the working people of the world. It has steadfastly defended the trade union rights and liberties of the workers."¹

But this was perhaps the last document in which the CIO

¹ CIO, *Proceedings*, 1947, p. 302.

leaders noted the positive role of the WFTU. Serious changes were taking place at that time within the CIO itself as the right-wing elements stepped up their activities. Less than a month after the convention, the rightist leaders of the CIO set about carrying out the plan they had hatched long ago—to gain a dominant position in the WFTU and alter its policies.

On November 12, 1947, before his departure for a session of the executive bureau of the WFTU, Carey said at a press conference that, on behalf of the CIO, he would put the question of the Marshall Plan before the WFTU. At the same time it was rumored that if the executive bureau did not make a positive decision, the CIO would withdraw from the WFTU. Publicly, however, the CIO executive board, and James Carey in particular, refrained from saying anything about the conditions for the approval of the Marshall Plan.

The meeting of the executive bureau opened on November 18, in Paris. From the outset, the CIO delegation proposed to include on the agenda an additional point on the American "aid" plan. The majority on the executive bureau rejected the proposal. Even the British delegates were indecisive, although they, Jouhaux and other reformist leaders insisted that the bureau should simply hear the report on the CIO's position without debating the issue. Carey, however, disregarded this condition and tried not only to express the CIO's point of view but to impose it upon the bureau. But he failed. Even the leaders of the British TUC did not support him. Nevertheless, immediately after the executive bureau meeting, the Americans began to apply pressure on the British representatives with the aim of compelling the TUC to accept the American European economic recovery plan.

The AFL leaders were particularly active at that time as they conducted their subversive work in the European labor centers, seeking to bring them over to their side. In November, AFL representatives Irving Brown and Henry Rutz went to Europe.

Brown sought to convince Meany of the need to call a trade union conference of the sixteen Marshall Plan countries. He felt that cooperation with the TUC was indispensable if such a conference was to succeed.¹ Negotiations with the TUC

¹ See Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*, p. 359.

leadership began on November 20. The AFL representatives urged the British leaders to take the initiative in calling a conference of European trade unions. The conservative British press whipped up rumors that the trade unions of the Western countries were all primed to withdraw from the WFTU, but would not do so until the TUC set the example.¹

On December 17, 1947, the TUC general council approved the Marshall Plan. Two days later, Brown arrived in Britain again and began talks with the TUC leaders, as a result of which emerged their ultimatum to the WFTU.

In November, the executive bureau decided to debate the Marshall Plan question, but the date for the next session was not set. On January 28, 1948, the TUC general council presented the WFTU with an ultimatum demanding that the executive bureau meet in mid-February. Otherwise, the document said, the general council would consider itself free to participate in, or take the initiative in organizing, whatever meetings may be necessary for the purpose of discussing with other national centers the question of US aid to Europe.

The Americans and British had been making preparations for a conference even before the ultimatum was issued. On January 3, 1948, Irving Brown urged all the anti-Communist trade unions and Socialist parties of the sixteen Marshall Plan countries to pool their forces in Europe. He gave assurances that within two months such trade unions would convene a congress in Brussels and create a new international organization. Brown's statement threw light on the true aims of the AFL leaders. From the very beginning they had sought the creation of an international organization to counterbalance the WFTU, and now the conference of trade unions from the Marshall Plan countries was designed to set the stage for the formation of such an organization. In these circumstances, the purpose of the ultimatum was to place the responsibility for the divisive act of calling a conference onto the WFTU, alleging that it forced the American and British labor leaders into making this move by its refusal to discuss the Marshall Plan question.

Formally, it was British, Belgian and Dutch trade union

¹ See *The Times* (London), November 17, 1947.

figures who took the initiative in convening the conference, but behind them stood the AFL leadership and AFL financing. Green admitted this on February 19, 1948 in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, where he said that delegates from the trade unions of non-communist countries that had accepted the Marshall Plan would gather in Brussels at the end of the next month, and the AFL would foot all the bills.

The British handled the preparations for the conference, but they kept in close contact with the leaders of the AFL, consulting with them on virtually every step. The British themselves did not conceal this fact.¹ In the meantime, the CIO was still hoping to win WFTU approval of the American plan or to cause various trade union centers to clash with each other, thereby clearing the way to CIO control of the WFTU. On February 4, 1948, James Carey and Michael Ross, head of the CIO's international department, went to Europe. In talks with the TUC general council and Force Ouvrière, they proposed a plan of action against the WFTU. It envisaged changing the character of the Federation's entire activity and a total reshuffle of its leading personnel. Their plan would affect the basic framework and constitution of the WFTU and would hamstring the democratic methods adopted at the inaugural congress.²

As it continued its trip through Europe, the CIO delegation hoped to incline European workers toward approving American "aid", and feel out the attitude to it in the main trade union centers of the WFTU. From Paris, Carey and Ross went to Moscow. The All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions examined the Marshall Plan question and handed Carey and Ross a declaration saying that this plan was a direct threat to the sovereignty and independence of European countries. It also noted that the Marshall Plan embraced the field of state, political relations between the USA and European countries and that in deciding such questions each state and each trade union center had the sovereign right to determine its own position. Further, it stressed that trade unions, which are not

¹ See *Daily Worker* (London), February 26, 1948.

² *Ibid.*, February 21, 1948.

political organizations, must not be turned into an arena for political gamble and machinations.

After this rebuke, the CIO leaders felt that they would be unable to use the Marshall Plan question for the purpose of altering WFTU policy, and hence actively joined in the preparations for the conference of trade unions from the Marshall Plan countries. And when on March 9, 1948 this conference began its work in London, sitting next to the AFL delegates were CIO representatives James Carey, Michael Ross and Elmer Cope.¹ The conference declared its support of the Marshall Plan and adopted a resolution to create a Union Consultative Committee on the Marshall Plan. The leaders of the AFL were counting on using this committee as an instrument for forming a new international trade union organization.

The London conference was part of the drive against the unity of the international labor movement. Although its organizers failed to draw other large trade union centers to their side and get their support for the Marshall Plan, nonetheless the conference led to serious consequences. It was the first open action to mobilize trade union centers in the Western countries in opposition to the WFTU.

After the London conference, the British and Americans continued their activities against the WFTU. This time they took advantage of a session of the executive bureau and executive committee of the WFTU in Rome, in April-May 1948. The CIO delegates did not conceal their antagonism to the WFTU and its leadership. Throwing the blame for the situation in the WFTU on its leadership, James Carey and his British partners did everything to impede the normal activity of the WFTU, and demanded a change in its policies. This is exactly what Carey's statement at a meeting of the executive bureau looked like. The Americans and British continued the same line at the meeting of the executive committee. On May 5, 1948, they tried to denigrate the leading WFTU figures. In addition, they tried to divert the executive committee from urgent questions of the WFTU's activity, again using for this purpose the allegation that the Soviet trade unions dominated the WFTU. The CIO and the TUC demanded a reshuffle in

¹ Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*, p. 381.

the leading personnel of the Federation and a change in its policies.

But the splitters did not achieve their goal. The progressive trade union centers of the USSR, France, Italy and Latin American countries seeking to preserve the unity of the Federation submitted a resolution to the executive committee outlining measures to straighten out the situation in the WFTU. Its seven points provided a good basis for agreement. The resolution formulated the attitude of the WFTU to the Marshall Plan, and stressed the right of each trade union center to determine its own position on the question.

In the meantime, the AFL leaders were busy trying to found a new international organization. As mentioned earlier, they had created a European center for such an organization in early 1948—the Union Consultative Committee on the Marshall Plan. Almost simultaneously, they formed another regional association, which they also hoped to use for the purpose of creating a splitting organization. This center was set up in Latin America. To carry out subversive work in the labor movement in Latin America, the AFL sent to Mexico “Brown No. 2”—Serafino Romualdi. He was a skilled secret service man who had worked for a number of years in the Office of Strategic Services.¹

The AFL leaders were out to create a new Latin American trade union organization to counterbalance the progressive Latin American Federation of Labor (CTAL). Romualdi, acting in cooperation with American intelligence, rallied around himself enemies of the CTAL. Back in December 1946, at a session of the WFTU executive committee, the leader of the CTAL, Lombardo Toledano, had exposed the subversive activities of the American trade union leaders in the Latin American union movement. At that time he read for the record a letter, dated June 27, sent by Matthew Woll to an AFL agent in the Cuban trade union movement. Woll wrote: “I was delighted to receive your letter and report of your meeting Romualdi and of developments having taken place in Haiti. I will be pleased to hear from you later regarding interview with the captain of the Military Intelligence Service and likewise of

¹ *Daily Worker*, December 12, 1946; *AFL-CIO News*, October 23, 1965.

your visit to Port au Prince and to British Jamaica.... I will also await further word from you regarding the Dominican Republic."¹

In January 1948, through efforts of the leaders of the AFL a conference of representatives of various groups opposing the CTAL was convened in Lima, Peru. The result was the creation of an organization called the Inter-American Labor Confederation (CIAT). It represented only a small part of the organized workers of Latin America. For example, the Chilean unions participating in the conference had a total membership of only 20,000 workers, compared with the 230,000 in the Chilean Federation of Labor.² Heated arguments broke out at the conference when Mexican delegate Luis Morones accused the AFL of financing the conference and subsidizing the delegations of Latin American countries.³

The leaders of the AFL reckoned that the new organization, together with the European committee, could become the nucleus of the international association they were planning. A statement made by Green a few days after the conference made this explicit. They hoped that the question of creating such an organization would be settled at the second conference of the unions of the Marshall Plan countries, scheduled for July 1948. Even before then, however, the AFL leadership made an attempt to talk the CIO into withdrawing from the WFTU. In June 1948, Woll wrote to Murray that the CIO should "prove its respectability by withdrawing from the World Federation of Trade Unions—after which the AFL might be glad to get together with the CIO".⁴

The CIO leaders, who a month earlier had signed the resolution of the Rome session of the WFTU executive committee, now showed, by their refusal to give rebuff to such demands, their unwillingness to work toward better cooperation with the other trade union centers in the WFTU. From Murray's reply it became even more apparent how few differences, actually, only tactical ones, remained bet-

¹ *Daily Worker*, November 15, 1948.

² *Daily Worker* (London), January 21, 1948.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *The CIO News*, June 14, 1948.

ween the leaders of the AFL and the CIO at that time.

The second conference of the unions of Marshall Plan countries opened in London on July 30, 1948. It was attended by 45 delegates, including 15 representing the AFL and CIO.¹ The conference considered the prospects of the activity of the above-mentioned Union Consultative Committee. The AFL delegates sought to turn the committee into a permanent body of the future international organization. The majority, however, felt this proposal to be premature. It was decided to form a permanent secretariat of the conference. The TUC leaders, meanwhile, assailed the WFTU, alleging that it was dominated by the Soviet trade unions and had become an instrument of Soviet foreign policy.

At the session of the executive bureau in September 1948, the leaders of the TUC and CIO refused to abide by the WFTU resolution, and in October the general council of the TUC issued an ultimatum demanding that either the Federation suspend its activity for one year, or else the TUC would withdraw. The CIO leaders took part in preparing the ultimatum. Not accidentally, they made statements at that time about their intention to submit a resolution at the next CIO convention, proposing CIO withdrawal from the WFTU and the creation of a new international organization.

Indeed, at the 10th convention of the CIO in Portland shortly thereafter, the CIO leaders won freedom of action with respect to the WFTU. A convention resolution authorized them to act without restrictions. The resolution said that "the CIO officers and Executive Board are authorized, in consultation with the British TUC and other free trade union centers, to take whatever action in relation to the WFTU and the international labor movement as will best accomplish CIO policies and objectives".²

The British ultimatum was greeted with even greater enthusiasm by the AFL leaders, who saw in it hope for the withdrawal of the TUC and CIO from the WFTU and the subsequent creation by the three organizations of a new international trade union center.

¹ Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*, p. 382.

² *Daily Proceedings of the Tenth Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, p. 8.

The progressive forces in the WFTU made a decisive stand against the attempt of the British and American union leaders to dictate their conditions to the Federation. Many national centers in the WFTU issued protests and condemned the attempts to destroy the WFTU. After discussing the British ultimatum, the administrative commission and secretariat of the CGT of France stated that they felt "that there is no valid reason to put the WFTU to sleep.... That if difficulties actually exist it is perfectly possible to iron them out in an atmosphere of good will and through the development of friendly relations among the various affiliated trade union centers."¹

The CIO leadership met with resistance also from its own membership. The resolution of the 10th CIO convention quoted above drew organized opposition from the delegates of progressive unions, who introduced their own resolution, which said: "Despite the fact that differences exist today between governments of various nations, it is possible for working people, through their unions, to find grounds for common action and mutual cooperation."² In line with this, the resolution proposed that the convention reaffirm its support of the WFTU.

The WFTU enjoyed prestige among the working people. It was not surprising, therefore, that, in preparing their blow against the WFTU, those who were organizing its split set themselves the task of suppressing any internal resistance. The general council of the TUC, for instance, mobilized a huge mass of its supporters to combat the Communists and other progressive elements in the labor movement of Great Britain. The CIO leaders, having already begun harassment of progressive unions, did not lag behind their British colleagues.

In January 1949, a CIO delegation came to London to discuss a plan for joint action with the leaders of the TUC. In an interview with the newspaper *Le Figaro*, Brown declared that the WFTU was "dead", adding: "It is necessary to bury it completely by laying the foundations of a new international organization of free trade unions."³ This was the main topic of

¹ *L'Humanité*, November 19, 1948.

² *Daily Proceedings of the Tenth Constitutional Convention of the CIO*, p. 9.

³ *Daily Worker* (London), December 31, 1948.

discussion between the CIO delegation and the TUC. During the talks they worked out the common line to follow at the meeting of the WFTU executive bureau scheduled for January 1949, in Paris.

The first question to arise at that meeting was that of the TUC ultimatum of October 27, 1948, on the temporary suspension of the WFTU's activities. On the eve of the session, the general council of the TUC stated that if the executive bureau rejected the ultimatum, the British trade unions would withdraw from the WFTU.

The progressive forces did everything they could to prevent the split of the WFTU. A resolution proposed by WFTU General Secretary Louis Saillant could have become the basis for settling disputes and the subsequent democratic solution of all issues. But this was just what the British and American union leaders did not want. Arthur Deakin, then President of the WFTU and chairman of that meeting of the executive bureau, refused to put Saillant's resolution to a vote. Instead, he declared the meeting closed and walked out, accompanied by his colleague Vincent Tewson, CIO representative Carey and Dutch representative Evert Kupers.

This walkout was the final move in a long series of stubborn attempts by the Americans to turn the WFTU into a vehicle for implementing US expansionist foreign policy plans. Failing in this, they opted for an open split of the international labor movement.

The anti-Communist campaign and subversive actions of the American union leaders in the international labor movement caused little protest in the ranks of the American working class. The overwhelming mass of American unionists, who in those years showed sound organization, high activity and persistence in the economic struggle, were passive with respect to policy questions connected with the international labor movement. In its mass, the American working class was unconcerned about the fate of the World Federation of Trade Unions, letting its union leaders enjoy a monopoly in this field. Only individual progressive CIO unions and local AFL organizations were able to make a correct assessment of the top leaders' conduct and realized the whole negative significance of the split in the WFTU.

On the other hand, the splitters met with serious rebuff within the WFTU itself and its major national centers. The British and Americans expected most of the European organizations to follow them in the split, and hoped that the international labor movement would thereby be weakened and the WFTU destroyed. But they miscalculated. The European working class had learned through the hard experience of the war all the consequences of division and the vital importance of the struggle for unity. This was the main reason why the major union centers of Europe remained in the ranks of the WFTU. The withdrawal of the British and Americans did not kill the WFTU, although, naturally, it did weaken working-class resistance to imperialism considerably. This was one of the heavy consequences of the divisive actions of the American trade union leaders.

CHAPTER X

THE KOREAN WAR AND McCARTHYISM

US foreign policy in the first half of the 1950s was characterized by an intensification of the cold war, a "positions-of-strength" policy against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and the fomenting of small wars. The aggressive foreign policy of the United States during this period manifested itself in the military adventure in Korea.

In late June 1950, world attention was riveted to Formosa Strait and events unfolding on the Korean peninsula. The US government had undertaken an attempt to liquidate the Korean People's Democratic Republic. Under the guise of protecting the population of South Korea, it landed troops on Korean soil and unleashed a war against the KPDR. Simultaneously, on instructions from Washington, ships of the US Seventh Fleet approached the shores of Taiwan and established control over the strait.

The frightful pictures of World War II had not yet faded in people's memories. Its gruesome consequences were still visible, yet mankind found itself on the brink of a new catastrophe. The US aggression in Korea was fraught with the danger of a new big war. A great wave of protest swelled up in many countries. Progressive sections of the American people also took an active part in the movement, and among them were organized workers.

As mentioned here earlier, a conference of progressive unions in October 1949 in Chicago set up a National Union Peace Conference. On the eve of the war in Korea this organization joined the movement for banning nuclear

weapons, and for settling international issues through negotiations between the Great Powers. The popularity of this worker organization grew rapidly. Its local branches in the form of trade union peace committees appeared not only in Chicago but in such centers as Detroit, Cleveland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

In March 1950, the Permanent Committee of the World Peace Congress in Stockholm issued an Appeal to the peoples of the world to launch a struggle to ban atomic weapons. The Appeal proposed that any government that first used the atom bomb be declared a war criminal. Everyone who yearned for peace was urged to sign this document. The Stockholm Appeal, to which millions of people on all continents responded, found many supporters in the United States. In April 1950, with the participation of the eminent scholar and public figure, W.E.B. Du Bois, an Information Center of Peace Partisans was established in New York to organize a drive to collect signatures to the Appeal. Soon, hundreds of committees through which the Information Center carried out its work appeared throughout the country. More than 200 shop and factory committees operated under the direction of the National Union Peace Conference. The campaign in the United States to collect signatures to the Stockholm Appeal was one of the forms of the peace movement.

When the American military carried out their attack on Korea in June 1950, the ruling circles of the USA sought to take advantage of the war hysteria to suppress the peace movement. People collecting signatures to the Stockholm Appeal were subjected to arrests and fines and dismissal from their jobs. The reactionary press urged the government to take harsh measures. But even in these circumstances almost 2,500,000 Americans had put their signatures to the Appeal by November 1950.

In 1950, the World Peace Congress convened in Warsaw. It was attended by an American delegation composed of sixty-three prominent intellectuals and trade union figures. After the close of the Congress, nineteen members of the delegation paid a visit to the Soviet Union. On December 28, 1950, one of the members of this group, a Protestant minister

from New Haven, Connecticut, Willard Uphouse, said in a letter to the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions: "No matter how dark the clouds become, all of you know now that you have many friends in the United States who are working night and day to help bring peace into the world.... There is a power in the world still greater than the most powerful of weapons—the power of all the people who demand peace through economic and cultural relations."¹ Another member of the American delegation, Yolanda Hall of Chicago, wrote to the AUCCTU on February 19, 1951: "We have had a very busy time since our delegation returned home, especially fulfilling the many requests that have been made to us to make reports on the World Peace Congress and our experiences in the Soviet Union. The Chicago delegation of eight reported back to a large and very successful mass meeting on January 12th in the Chicago Coliseum. Since then we estimate we have spoken to at least 10,000 Chicagoans in meetings of various kinds.... There is also a growing sentiment for peace among the people here and a grass-roots expression of the need to end the war in Korea."²

The Communist Party, progressive trade unions and other democratic organizations condemned the American intervention in Korea. On June 29, 1951, the Communist Party issued a call to all working people to demand of the government the withdrawal of US troops from the Far East.

On July 7, Ford workers in Dearborn, Michigan, sent a letter to Senator Vandenberg, urging the cessation of the aggression in Korea. Similar messages were sent to the President of the United States by the Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, and the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards.

The slogan "Hands Off Korea!" rang out loud and clear at meetings of progressive organizations. On August 2, 1950, a mass demonstration, organized by the Information Center of Peace Partisans, was held in New York. The demonstrators were attacked by police. However, repressive actions of this

¹ AUCCTU Central Archive, Moscow.

² *Ibid.*

kind only added fuel to the movement of protest against the intervention in Korea. A week later, an organization called Women Strike for Peace emerged in New York. On October 24, some 1,000 women went to the United Nations headquarters to demand an end to the US aggression against the Korean people. In another development, over 100 figures from the AFL, the CIO and independent unions signed a statement for the press, demanding the cessation of the aggression.

The Communist Party held its 15th convention in New York, December 28-31, 1950. It was a period of growing anti-Communist hysteria, repressive actions were being taken against the party, and most of its leaders had been brought to trial. On May 12, 1950, General Secretary of the Party's National Committee Eugene Dennis had been sent to prison for "contempt of Congress" under a sentence passed by a New York court back in 1947. He was to remain in prison until March 12, 1951. In the summer and autumn of 1950, local authorities in the states struck out against a number of party organizations. A trial was staged of a party committee in Alabama. In Birmingham, Alabama, the local authorities declared the party outlawed. Preparations were being made for a trial of Communists in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on charges of sedition. The party organization in the state of Indiana was outlawed. In October, in accordance with the anti-Communist provisions of the McCarran-Wood Internal Security Act of 1950, the Subversive Activities Control Board was preparing to enforce the requirement that the Communist Party register with the Department of Justice.

It was under these circumstances that the 15th convention of the Communist Party was held. Gus Hall delivered the National Committee's political report, devoting primary attention to the struggle for peace and against the US intervention in Korea.

After discussing these questions, the convention resolved that the party's central tasks should include exposure of the imperialist plans of the ruling circles of the USA and the struggle for halting the aggression in Korea.¹

¹ "Working-Class and People's Unity for Peace. Main Resolution of the 15th CP USA National Convention", *Political Affairs*, January 1951.

During that period, as the anti-Communist hysteria mounted and repression of Communists increased, liquidationist sentiments appeared in the Communist Party, and this found expression at the convention. Thus, a number of delegates demanded that party membership be reduced, saying that the party should rid itself of accidental, alien elements, which, in their opinion, had deluged it and were fighting against it, criticizing allegedly "incorrect organizational principles of party structure". In his concluding speech, Gus Hall condemned these tendencies as liquidationist.

The 15th convention analyzed the results of the 1950 congressional election campaign and took a critical view of the assessment of the political sentiments of the masses that had been made at the previous convention. In contrast to the 14th convention, the 15th pointed out that there were no visible signs of a mass breakaway from the two old parties.¹ The working class and the Negro people, it stressed, still believed in the Democratic Party and considered it a lesser evil than the Republican Party.

In January 1951, trade union locals in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, came out with the demand for the withdrawal of American forces from Korea and other countries. At about the same time, Local 600 of the UAW in Detroit issued a protest against the continuing war.

In February 1951, the trade union organization of the steelworkers in Lorain, Ohio, took a poll of 12,000 workers on the question: Should the US government withdraw its forces from Korea and ban the atom bomb? Almost seventy-five per cent of those polled replied in the affirmative. Similar polls were taken in Cleveland, Detroit, New York and elsewhere. At the steel mills of United States Steel and Republic Steel in Chicago, the overwhelming majority of the workers answered in the affirmative to the question: Are you in favor of an immediate cease-fire in Korea and bringing the American troops back home?

Protest against the Korean adventure also came from Negro organizations. Numerous facts indicating an unwillingness to fight in Korea were registered in the Negro units of the US

¹ See *Political Affairs*, January 1951, p. 22.

Army. Quite a few Negroes refused to carry out military orders for which many were court-martialed. Wide publicity was given to the trial in August 1950 of Lt. Leon A. Gilbert, who was condemned to death for anti-war activity.¹ The authorities sought to use the trial to inhibit Negro servicemen and the whole Negro population in the USA. The numerous actions in his defense compelled the authorities to commute the death sentence to 20 years' imprisonment.

The Second World Peace Congress in Warsaw in November 1950 and the first session of the World Peace Council in Berlin in February 1951 opened a new stage in the peace movement. In the forefront now was the struggle against the remilitarization of West Germany and actions in defense of the Korean people.

At that time, 65 public and labor figures launched the American Peace Crusade. At a conference of this organization in Chicago it was decided to stage a march on Washington in protest against the war in Korea. On the eve of the march, CIO and AFL union leaders urged Truman to begin negotiations to settle the Korean conflict.

The anti-war movement was active in many states. On March 15, 1951, 2,500 marchers from 36 states, most of them trade union members, arrived in Washington and presented a petition to Congress and the White House, demanding an end to the war. Hugh Bryson, president of the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards, in a letter to the AUCCTU, dated March 31, 1951, wrote from San Francisco that his union was resolutely opposed to the intervention in Korea and as early as June 29, 1950 had called for removal of all foreign troops.² In April, a convention of the ILWU adopted a resolution on the need to intensify the struggle for peace. It contained proposals for universal curtailment and cessation of the arms race, and recognition of the possibility of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. The longshoremen called for expansion of trade with all countries, abandonment of the policy of rearming Germany and Japan, and a ban on sending American troops to Indochina. Finally, the resolution de-

¹ *Daily Worker*, October 6, 1950.

² The October Revolution Central State Archives, Moscow.

manded an immediate end to the war in Korea, the withdrawal from its territory of all foreign troops, and steps to ensure peace in the Far East.¹

Many unions took an active part in May Day demonstrations in which the peace slogan and the demand for an end to the war in Korea were prominent. An impressive demonstration took place in New York, for example, where 75,000 marched in the streets for peace. On May 9, 59 officials of local CIO unions addressed a letter to a conference of deputy foreign ministers of the USSR, USA, Britain and France being held in Paris, in which they urged that every effort be made to prevent the Korean war from developing into a world war. In late June, a peace congress was held in Chicago, with about 5,000 representatives of various organizations taking part. The main theme of all the speeches and resolutions was "End the War Now!"

At the same time, the Korean question became the subject of heated debate in Congress. On February 14, 1951, Congressman Lawrence Smith (Rep., Wisconsin) read a statement in the House of Representatives on behalf of 118 Republicans, which said that government propaganda was again beating the war drums. The people were alarmed and confused. They had lost confidence in the President and Congress and were demanding measures to save Americans from catastrophe. Reflecting the growing anxiety of the masses, Senator Edwin Johnson (Dem., Colorado) introduced a draft resolution calling for an armistice in Korea by June 25, 1951.² The trade unions hailed the resolution and urged its immediate adoption. But Congress hesitated making such a "hasty" decision on the question. The executive committee of the Fur and Leather Workers Union, in a message to the membership, dated August 10, 1951, wrote: "It is now more than a year since the bloody fighting in Korea began. Already, this war has cost us over 80,000 American casualties.... We supported the resolution introduced into the Senate by Senator Johnson, calling for a 'cease-fire' in Korea and the negotiation of differences over the

¹ *Proceedings of the Ninth Biennial Convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union at Honolulu, San Francisco, 1951.*

² *CR*, May 1951, p. 5424.

conference table.... We call upon ... every member of our Union to speak up *now* for an immediate cease-fire in Korea...."¹

In 1952, conventions of the fur and leather, electrical and radio, and mine, mill and smelter workers' unions demanded restoration of peace in Korea, the convening of a conference of the Great Powers on easing international tension, a return to a peaceful economy, and the elimination of trade barriers between the United States and other countries. The newspapers of the miners, railroad workers, and packinghouse workers emphasized the desire of American workers to put an end to the war in Korea.

The movement for peace and against the war in Korea could have been more massive and effective had the leaders of the AFL, the CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods shared the views and sentiments of the progressive workers and supported the peace movement. In this connection, it is important to examine the attitude of the leading trade union officials to the war in Korea and the arms race.

In January 1950, Truman ordered work to begin on the creation of the hydrogen bomb. How did the leading figures in the American trade unions react to this? On February 14, the CIO executive board adopted a resolution supporting the government's policy and its decision to create the hydrogen bomb. Some of the board members voted against the resolution. Following this, they were subjected to harassment and then expelled from the CIO. These were representatives of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the Food, Tobacco and Agricultural Workers, the Communications Association of America, the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards, the United Office and Professional Workers. Having secured the executive board's resolution, a group of CIO leaders headed by Murray paid a visit to US Secretary of State Dean Acheson on February 18, and announced their approval of Truman's order. In a letter to Acheson they said that "respect for the American viewpoint ... can be won by militant democratic policies, not by appeasement".²

¹ Central State Archives of the October Revolution, Moscow.

² *The New York Times*, February 19, 1950, p. 22.

It was at that time that the CIO leaders completed the process, which they had begun in 1949, of expelling progressive unions. We might recall that in November 1949, at the 11th national convention of the CIO in Cleveland, the Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers and the United Farm Equipment Workers were expelled. This was followed by improvised "trials" of other unions. On December 19, a CIO commission headed by Allan Haywood conducted an investigation of the CIO California Labor Council, and expelled it in January 1950 for opposing CIO policy and the Marshall Plan.

The United Office and Professional Workers in Washington was accused of having taken an active part in the movement for opening the Second Front in Europe, and of demanding, after the war, the withdrawal of American forces from Europe and Asia.

January 1950 was a month of disgraceful procedures which showed how far the leaders of the CIO had sunk. The executive board ended its sessions in Washington with a series of expulsions: on February 15, 1950, it expelled the mine, mill and smelters' union, the food, tobacco and agricultural workers' union, and the United Office and Professional Workers. This was followed by the expulsion on March 1 of the United Office and Professional Workers; on June 15, of the Fur and Leather Workers; and on June 25, of the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards. And, finally, on August 29, the executive board expelled the militant International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, widely known for its democratic traditions.

The leaders of the AFL and CIO supported the war of American imperialism in Korea. Upon Murray's proposal, the 12th convention of the CIO (November 20-24, 1950, Chicago) adopted a foreign policy declaration in which it again approved the practical activity of the CIO leadership supporting the militarization of the economy and an aggressive foreign policy.

As for the AFL, at Green's proposal its 69th convention held in Houston, Texas, approved President Truman's actions with respect to the intervention in Korea.

At the beginning of 1951, the AFL executive council rejected a resolution calling for peaceful settlement of the Korean

question, and insisted instead on a blockade of the Korean People's Democratic Republic, continued occupation of Taiwan, and assistance to the Chiang Kai-shek clique. At the 70th convention of the AFL held in September of that year in San Francisco, Green said that the US government should continue the war in Korea for as long as necessary. And at the 71st convention in September 1952, in New York, Green admitted of no possibility whatever of a compromise with the KPDR.

With this kind of policy it was no wonder that the movement against the war in Korea could not gather enough momentum to influence the government to seek an immediate cease-fire. Many big unions in the major industries confined themselves to making general declarations about the need to stop the war, but did not actually get into the fight for peace.

To desire peace and to actively fight for it are not the same thing. This was the essential difference in the attitude to the Korean war between the unions headed by rightist leaders and the progressive unions. The masses of workers did not want war, but only a minority took an active part in the peace movement. As the Communist press noted at the time, the peace movement in the United States was "considerably weaker than the movements in the capitalist countries of Europe".¹ The American working class was still under the potent influence of reactionary labor leaders, and that was why it was not taking as active a part in the struggle for peace as the working class of the European countries. But even so, as the magazine *Political Affairs* noted, "the American peace movement, though relatively weak, continues to make, in increasing measure, an important contribution to the struggle for peace".² The armistice agreement signed in Panmunjom on July 27, 1953, was the result of the mass movement of peace forces on an international scale. Progressive Americans who took part in this movement contributed their bit to the struggle to end the war in Korea.

From the very outset of the anti-war movement the power elite started looking for stronger measures to restrain the

¹ *Political Affairs*, September 1952, p. 22.

² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

progressive forces and the working class. In Congress reactionaries demanded more stringent repressive legislation.

On September 23, in an atmosphere of war hysteria, the 81st Congress passed the Internal Security Act of 1950. Introduced by Patrick McCarran (Dem., Nevada), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security, and John S. Wood (Dem., Georgia), member of the House of Representatives and chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee, it came to be known also as the McCarran-Wood Act.¹

Similar bills had been introduced into Congress back in 1948, authored by Senator Karl Mundt (Rep., South Dakota) and Representative Richard Nixon (Rep., Calif.), who was to become President of the United States in 1969. However, at that time their efforts failed. In 1950, after the incursion of American forces into Korea, the political atmosphere was more favorable for these aims. The splitting campaign in the CIO was at its height, preventing the working class from closing ranks, and weakening its ability to resist. The fact that nearly all the officers of the AFL and CIO had by the end of 1950 signed affidavits swearing that they did not belong to the Communist Party, as required under the Taft-Hartley Act, would indicate that they recognized that law and had actually given up active struggle for its repeal.

In September 1949, the National Labor Relations Board reported that 184 unions had filed such affidavits; these included 99 AFL, 34 CIO and 51 independent unions. A total of 9,246 union locals had filed non-Communist affidavits. In the first months, 84,466 union officials had filed such affidavits,² and by November 1952, the number reached 232,000. They represented 25,935 national and international unions and locals. All this encouraged the extremist elements in Congress to undertake new steps to strengthen reactionary legislation, evidence of which was the McCarran-Wood Act of 1950.

The stated purpose of the Act was "to protect the United States against un-American and subversive activities". One of the chief means of accomplishing this objective was to require

¹ *CR*, September 7 to September 23, 1950, pp. 15265-85.

² *The CIO News*, September 19, 1949.

registration of Communist organizations.¹ Title I of the Act, entitled Subversive Activities Control, states: "The Communist movement in the United States is an organization numbering thousands of adherents, rigidly and ruthlessly disciplined. Awaiting and seeking to advance a moment when the United States may be so far divided in counsel, or so far in industrial or financial straits, that overthrow of the Government of the United States by force and violence may seem possible of achievement, it seeks converts far and wide by an extensive system of schooling and indoctrination.... The Communist organization in the United States, pursuing its stated objectives, the recent successes of Communist methods in other countries, and the nature and control of the world Communist movement itself, present a clear and present danger to the security of the United States and to the existence of free American institutions, and make it necessary that Congress, in order to provide for the common defense, to preserve the sovereignty of the United States as an independent nation ... enact appropriate legislation recognizing the existence of such worldwide conspiracy and designed to prevent it from accomplishing its purpose in the United States."²

The Act divided all "subversive" organizations into two categories: (1) Communist-action organizations, or the Communist Party as such; (2) Communist-front organizations, or any organization in the United States which in essence is under the direction, control or subordination of a Communist-action organization.

Into the latter category, the Act put any organization suspected of being sympathetic to or having links with the Communist Party. This definition made it possible to put any labor organization into the second category on the ground that its demands coincided with points in the Communist Party program. Such an organization could be listed as a Communist-front organization, declared "subversive", and subjected to prosecution.

Section 4 of Title I listed a number of proscribed actions ("to unite", enter into a "conspiracy", transmit information

¹ *CR*, September 20, 1950, p. 15265.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15266.

affecting the security of the United States, etc.).¹ Violation of any provision of this section was punishable by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or by imprisonment for not more than ten years, or both. Section 5 provided for measures to restrict and prohibit the employment of members of Communist-action or Communist-front organizations. Members of the Communist Party and persons sympathetic to them were deprived of the right to obtain US passports to go abroad.

Sections 7 and 8 required the Communist Party and all Communist-front organizations to register with the Attorney General and file annual financial reports and lists of the members of organizations or other persons taking an active part in them. Only after compliance with these conditions would they receive limited opportunity to use postal, radio and telegraph communications. Notification of what was sent through the mails and transmitted over the radio or telegraph by such Communist or Communist-front organizations was made mandatory.² Section 12 provided for the establishment of a Subversive Activities Control Board, consisting of five members, whose functions included that of determining whether a given group was a Communist-action or a Communist-front organization subject to the registration requirements of the Act.

Section 15 provided for punishment by a fine of not more than \$10,000 for violation of any provision of Section 10 by an organization, and by the same fine or imprisonment for not more than five years or both for violation of any provision in sections 5, 6 or 10 by an individual.

Some of the sections of the law amended the Acts of 1918 and 1940 relating to aliens. Amendments to the law of October 16, 1918, prohibited the entry into the United States of aliens who were members of the Communist Party of the USA, or a Communist-front organization, or "with respect to whom there is reason to believe that such aliens would, after entry, be likely to (A) engage in activities which would be prohibited by the laws of the United States..., (B) engage in any activity a

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15267.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 15267-68.

purpose of which is the opposition to, or the control or overthrow of, the Government of the United States by force, violence, or other unconstitutional means; or (C) organize, join, affiliate with, or participate in the activities of any organization which is registered or required to be registered under Section 7 of the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950" (Sec. 22).¹

Amendments to the Smith Act of June 28, 1940, known as the Alien Registration Act of 1940, required that all aliens listed by the investigating agencies as persons connected with a Communist-action organization, register annually with the Attorney General. All "suspect" aliens (mainly from among those Americans who were not yet citizens in 1950) were subject to detainment, trial, the exclusion and deportation (Sec. 22).² The law provided that no person would thereafter be naturalized as a citizen of the United States "who advocates or teaches, or who is a member of or affiliated with any organization that advocates or teaches, opposition to all organized Government; or who is a member of or affiliated with any Communist-action organization..."³ Persons who had been naturalized in the preceding five years and were found to be suspect could lose their citizenship (Section 25). Persons applying for naturalization were required to undergo a loyalty check and to take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution and laws of the United States. Title II of the McCarran-Wood Act empowered the President of the USA to declare a state of emergency and the Attorney General to confine all "suspicious persons" in jail or concentration camps for the duration of the emergency.

To understand the full meaning of these amendments, we should bear in mind that a sizable part of the American working class consisted of just this kind of "aliens", often denied citizenship precisely because they were leaders or activists in democratic organizations or held progressive views. This is what happened, for example, to the head of the

¹ CR, September 20, 1950, pp. 15271-72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15281.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 15274.

International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, Harry Bridges.

The McCarran-Wood Act amendments essentially repeated the provisions of the Smith Act of 1940 which made it possible to prosecute any organization or its members on charges of "conspiracy" to establish a "totalitarian dictatorship" in the United States. As the progressive American press noted, such charges could be brought against the leaders of any big strike, especially at a defense plant. The necessary "evidence" could easily be found or fabricated with the help of hired false witnesses. After investigating the Communist Party's activities in 1951 and 1952, the Subversive Activities Control Board headed by S. Richardson on the pretext that the Party operated on orders from abroad ruled that it must register with the Attorney General.

At the same time numerous arrests were made, and in a number of places Communists were brought to trial. The Communist Party appealed the decision of the SACB, but the court left the decision in force. Then the National Committee of the Communist Party appealed the case of the eleven Communist Party leaders, convicted in Foley Square in 1949, to the Supreme Court. However, on June 4, 1951, the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the New York district court and the constitutionality of the Smith Act. On June 20, another 17 prominent Communists were arrested. And on July 2, in accordance with the June 4 decision of the Supreme Court, seven members of the National Committee, including Eugene Dennis, went to jail to serve the terms meted out to them by the court in Foley Square.¹ That same month, 12 leaders of the Communist Party organization of California were arrested.

In upholding the convictions of the leaders of the North Carolina Communist Party organization, the circuit court of appeals hearing the case in July 1952 held that the Communist Party was itself a "criminal conspiracy", that mere membership in it could be construed as unlawful, and that circulation of Marxist classics was not protected by constitutional guarantee-

¹ The other four members of the National Committee who had been convicted by the court in Foley Square went underground, but served their sentences later at different times.

es of freedom of the press.¹ In 1951 and 1952, arrests of Communists took place in Maryland and Pennsylvania. On August 17, 1951, a group of trade union figures in Pittsburgh were arrested under the Smith Act on false charges of "conspiracy to teach and advocate the overthrow of the government by force and violence". All of them were veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Republican Spain and had fought against Franco's fascist forces. Among the defendants was the leader of the local Communist Party organization in the state of Pennsylvania, Steve Nelson, who was sentenced on June 10, 1952 to twenty years' imprisonment, with a fine of \$10,000. In a letter from the Blawnox Workhouse jail in Pittsburgh, Nelson wrote: "My 'crime' is that I opposed the US war policy, and its criminal war in Korea and that my friends and I fought for peace."² Although the sentence was annulled in response to wide protest by progressive forces, nonetheless Nelson was soon prosecuted again and sentenced to five years' imprisonment on charges of sedition.

The anti-union hysteria gripped Congress, which devoted the greater part of its sessions in 1952 to new anti-union bills. The election campaign of 1952 diverted attention from the anti-labor bills for a while; however, by the summer of that year Congress passed the McCarran-Walter bill,³ which sought to regulate the national composition of the population by establishing stiffer immigration quotas. Truman vetoed the bill on June 25, but both houses of Congress overrode the veto, and the bill became law, going into effect on December 24 as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952.⁴ Serving as a supplement to the McCarran-Wood Act, it was directed against the penetration into the United States of politically "undesirable" aliens by introducing new and stricter quotas and increasing the control over their entry. It also served as the juridical basis for deporting "undesirable" Americans of foreign origin. The overall immigration quota was set at

¹ *Daily Worker*, September 2, 1952.

² The October Revolution Central State Archives, Moscow.

³ Francis E. Walter, a Democrat, was chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee at the time.

⁴ CR, May 21 to June 10, 1952, pp. 6947-86.

154,600 persons per year instead of the 340,000 permitted under the relevant laws of 1948 and 1950.¹

The McCarran-Walter Act was clearly racist in character. It almost completely banned the entry of immigrants from Africa, and set a limit of 2,000 per year from Asian countries.² It forbade entry into the US of persons suspected of disloyalty or affiliation with organizations advocating the "overthrow of the government by force and violence". The Act created especially difficult conditions for unnaturalized Americans of foreign origin. It considered political loyalty to be one of the main conditions for granting citizenship.

The McCarran-Wood and McCarran-Walter acts, together with the Smith and the Taft-Hartley acts, represented essentially a single system aimed at weakening the political activity of the working class, undermining the militant spirit in the labor movement, and restricting strikes. These acts created conditions for increasing government control over trade unions, their members, their meetings and their publications.

In the years under review, reaction increased its pressure on progressive CIO unions and democratic forces in such organizations as the American Labor Party of New York, the American Slav Congress, the International Workers Order, and the Labor Youth League. All were on the lists of subversive and Communist-front organizations.

Thus, the history of the labor movement in the first half of the 1950s was characterized by an intensification of political reaction. Striving to secure a reliable rear for new acts of aggression, the American monopolies, through the government, undertook a whole series of legislative measures to undermine the labor movement in the United States.

There is perhaps no other area of political activity in which the American working class so obviously reveals its ideological and organizational weakness, its traditional political dependence on the bourgeoisie and its parties, as in the sphere of election campaigning. In 1948, the overwhelming majority of worker votes went to the Democratic Party. For this, the latter

¹ CR, January 19, 1953, Appendix, p. 222; April 1, 1953, Appendix, pp. 1841-42.

² CR, April 1, 1953, Appendix, p. 1842.

was largely obliged to the political activity of the powerful machinery of the trade unions, whose political action committees and the non-partisan labor league in the states and in Washington, D.C., waged a hard campaign to elect a "good president" and "good congressmen".

The year 1952 was again a presidential and congressional election year. On June 7, 1952, the national convention of the Republican Party opened in Chicago. There the Republicans nominated General Eisenhower for President, and Senator Richard Nixon of California for Vice-President. The influence of the Republicans, who enjoyed the support of the big monopolies and banks, had grown. This was helped to a certain extent by Eisenhower's popularity as a "brave and incorruptible soldier", and also his promise to end the war in Korea and amend the Taft-Hartley Act.

The AFL and CIO leaders were, as before, oriented toward the Democratic Party, and spared no efforts to sway trade unionists to vote for its candidates. Many of the delegates to the Democratic Party convention, which was held in Chicago, July 21-26, 1952, were from the ranks of AFL and CIO unions. Among them were well-known labor figures like Harrison and Dubinsky of the AFL, and Murray, Reuther and Kroll from the CIO. A Committee of Ten which they selected conducted virtually all the negotiations with the leaders of the Democratic Party and submitted its proposals to the convention committee. The proposals received full approval since they were not at variance with the general spirit of the Democratic platform.

The AFL and CIO leaders supported the candidates nominated at that convention: Adlai Stevenson for President, and Senator John Sparkman of Alabama for Vice-President. The 71st convention of the AFL, held in September 1952, in New York, came out in support of Stevenson.

In August 1952, the executive board of the CIO declared that Stevenson's election would mean the continuation of the best traditions and ideals of the New Deal and Fair Deal. A delegation headed by Murray paid a call on Truman and, calling him "a great friend of labor", assured him that the Democrats would have labor's unanimous support in the elections.

To help in the campaign, a National Trade Union Commit-

tee to Elect Stevenson and Sparkman was created. Headed by AFL vice-president and president of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks George Harrison, the committee, which included more than 75 representatives of the AFL, CIO and independent unions, launched a fund-raising drive.

The Progressive Party, which also waged an election campaign in 1952, found that its positions and influence had deteriorated sharply. It had continued its activity after 1948, but experienced great difficulties. The AFL, CIO and the independent railroad and coal miners' unions remained hostile to it, while the progressive unions that had been expelled from the CIO were too absorbed in the fight for survival to give it the support it needed. The contradictions in the party leadership increased. Wallace showed signs of nervousness. Increasingly, he expressed dissatisfaction with actions taken by the national committee and a number of state committees. In August 1950, he announced his withdrawal from the party.

In November 1951, the national committee of the Progressive Party called a conference of its organizations in the northern and mid-western states. About 300 party functionaries attended. The conference outlined measures to revitalize the movement for a cease-fire in Korea and the convening of a conference of the heads of the Great Powers for this purpose. In July 1952, the party held its third national convention in Chicago, with some 2,000 delegates representing local organizations in forty states in attendance. The convention voiced sharp criticism of the foreign policy of the government. Lawyer Vincent Hallinan was nominated for President, and Black journalist Charlotte Bass for Vice-President.

The party, again subjected to repression, had little chance against the two major parties. Indeed, in the 1952 election, Hallinan gathered only 140,000 votes. Soon after this, the party found itself in even worse straits. It lost financial support even from progressive circles, and by the mid-1950s ceased to exist.

The overwhelming mass of Americans again gave their votes to the major bourgeois parties. A considerable percentage of the unionized workers (36 per cent, as compared with 26 per cent in 1948), disappointed in the domestic and foreign policies of the Democrats, voted for the Republican candidates.

The Republicans won. Of the 61,500,000 votes cast, Eisenhower received 33,900,000, or 55.1 per cent, and Stevenson—27,300,000, or 44.4 per cent. Thus Eisenhower became the thirty-fourth President of the United States.

In Congress, a new lineup emerged as a result of the elections: the House of Representatives now consisted of 221 Republicans, 213 Democrats, and one independent; the Senate, of 48 Republicans, 47 Democrats, and one independent.¹

The monopolies did not conceal their satisfaction with the elections, nor were their hopes left unrealized, for there were twice as many capitalists in Eisenhower's administration as in Truman's. Appointed as Secretary of Defense was ex-president of General Motors Charles Wilson, who in that post had received an annual salary of \$566,000. John Foster Dulles, who had a salary of \$150,000 a year as head of the firm of Sullivan and Cromwell prior to entering the Eisenhower administration, became Secretary of State. The Secretary of the Treasury was financier George Humphrey, whose income in 1951 amounted to \$305,000. Other cabinet posts also went to capitalists: Sinclair Weeks, Secretary of Commerce; Arthur E. Summerfield, Postmaster General; Herbert Brownell, Attorney General; Douglas McKay, Secretary of the Interior; and Ezra Benson, Secretary of Agriculture. The only exception to this pattern was the appointment of Martin Durkin, president of the AFL United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the USA and Canada, as Secretary of Labor. It was, as some people remarked wryly, a cabinet of ten capitalists and one plumber.

The Republicans publicized this fact, presenting it as the embodiment of "national unity". Durkin's stand in the administration was defined by AFL union leaders as one of cooperation with the capitalist cabinet members. To all intents and purposes, the 15th convention of the CIO, held in Cleveland in 1953, also gave its stamp of approval to this position. AFL president George Meany, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union David Dubinsky, and other AFL leaders hastened to assure President

Eisenhower of their sincere intention to cooperate with his administration. A United Automobile Workers convention in 1953 expressed the hope that "President Eisenhower will and can carry out the commitments he made to protect the public interest".¹

This hope, however, was not realized. The Eisenhower administration had no intention of abandoning the domestic and foreign policy principles of its predecessor. It merely improved on them in the interests of the monopolies. The leaders of the AFL and CIO had to maneuver between the two parties and the rank-and-file union members who were expecting Eisenhower to fulfil his promises. The Taft-Hartley Act was not repealed. Durkin remained as Secretary of Labor only a few months, then resigned "in protest". He was replaced by a man who was more reliable from the standpoint of the monopolies, James P. Mitchell. In an address to the trade unions he unequivocally stated that he supported the Taft-Hartley Act.

The national election conference of the Communist Party, which took place in New York, August 7-8, 1954, noted that the illusions that certain sections of the working class had entertained in connection with Eisenhower's election were dissipated by the anti-union measures taken by the administration, Durkin's resignation, the administration's attempts to make even wider use of the Taft-Hartley Act, and the demand made by Attorney General Brownell that the provisions of the McCarran Act should be extended to all unions.

The rampage of McCarthyism in 1953-1954 (which we shall discuss further on), and indications of crisis in the economy caused widespread discontent among organized workers. A number of labor organizations condemned McCarthyism and Republican policies.

In 1954, the Republicans sustained serious losses in the mid-term elections, and the Democrats gained a majority in Congress. Many union members who had voted for the Republicans in 1952, now voted for the Democrats.

¹ Andrew Stevens, *New Opportunities in the Fight for Peace and Democracy. Main Report Delivered at the National Conference of the Communist Party, U.S.A., New York, 1953*, p. 30.

¹ *National Guardian*, November 15, 1954.

At the juncture of 1952 and 1953, the ruling circles took another step along the road of restricting bourgeois democratic freedoms. This move was prompted by the onset of a recession and the failure of the Korean adventure. In an effort to overcome the difficulties of economic development and to suppress democratic tendencies, reaction launched a new offensive. In Congress, the legislators stepped up their activity. Emerging as head of the right wing was Republican Senator from Wisconsin Joseph McCarthy.

The spread of McCarthyism was the result of the US ruling circles' intensified imperialist foreign policies and reactionary policies at home. This intensification was attended by the Democratic Party's gradual abandonment of Roosevelt's political line. Anti-communist propaganda, persecution of democratic figures, and raising the communist bogey were potent means of manipulating the thoughts and feelings of many Americans. It was this atmosphere of fear and suspicion that helped bring about the rise of such an ultra-reactionary as McCarthy.

Who was he? What harm did he inflict on the labor movement, and how did organized workers struggle against McCarthyism?

Historians Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais called McCarthy, when he appeared on the scene, "a brashly ambitious freshman Senator from Wisconsin"; Fred Cook called him a reckless and unscrupulous fortune hunter¹; and publicist Richard Rovere characterized him as "a political thug, a master of the mob, an exploiter of popular fears. He used the fear of Bolshevism as Hitler used it...."² As chairman of the Senate Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments and head of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, he concentrated great power in his hands.

In the words of well-known public figure Corliss Lamont, "Grand Inquisitor McCarthy undertook to ruin anyone—no matter what his views, affiliations or party—who stood in the way of his ambition to become supreme political boss of the

¹ Fred Cook, "The Ultras. Aims, Affiliations and Finances of the Radical Right", *Nation*, June 30, 1962, Special Issue.

² Richard H. Rovere, *Senator Joe McCarthy*, New York, 1959, p. 19.

country, operating through intimidation and rabbleroxing".¹ Noting that he had assailed millions of Americans, Boyer and Morais wrote: "To the remainder of the world it seemed as if Americans had succumbed to mass insanity when McCarthy and Attorney General Brownell actually charged that former President Truman was himself a part of the so-called Communist conspiracy."²

Of himself, McCarthy said cynically that he expected to "end up either in the White House or in jail".³ He was elected to the Senate in 1946 with the help of the most reactionary circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie. In particular, he got support from the Du Pont family, and Colonel Robert McCormick, owner of the *Chicago Tribune*, and General Robert E. Wood, former chairman of the pro-fascist America First Committee, both leaders of a reactionary nationalistic organization, American Action. McCarthy's activity in the Senate was supported by people like Texas oil magnate H.L. Hunt, president of the Republic Steel Corporation Charles White, and chairman of the board of directors of Armco Steel Charles Hook. An ambitious politician and rabid anti-Communist, the senator from Wisconsin appeared to them to be a perfectly suitable vehicle for accomplishing their ends. McCarthy did not let them down. One of his first acts upon election to Congress was to protest against punishment of the German war criminals who had perpetrated the massacre of American prisoners of war in Malmédy.

So long as McCarthy acted alone and his activity remained within the halls of Congress he did not pose a serious danger. But it was not long before a group of ultra-right congressmen, men like Goldwater, Wood, McCarran, McCormick, Walter and Thomas, gathered around him. It was when the ultra extremist elements in the country began to count on him that McCarthy became socially dangerous.

McCarthy made the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on

¹ Corliss Lamont, *Freedom Is As Freedom Does. Civil Liberties Today*, New York, 1956, pp. 74-75.

² R.O. Boyer and H.M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story*, New York, 1955, pp. 373-74.

³ *Observer*, January 10, 1960.

Investigations his center. Called up before this committee daily were dozens of trade union and public figures—journalists, scientists, leaders and rank-and-file members of such democratic organizations as the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, the Civil Rights Congress, etc. The “witnesses” called to testify were blackmailed and threatened with jail or loss of employment. The McCarthyites fanned the anti-Communist hysteria in the press and over the radio. Just about every automobile or air accident was declared to be the result of Communist sabotage, every murder an act of Communist terror, and every strike the work of Communists. The reactionary newspapers and magazines came out with blaring scare headlines: “Flying Saucers Over America!”, “Red Submarines Off the Coast of California!”, “New York in Ruins!”, “Soviet Spies in America!”

The imperialist forces used this device to cover up their anti-democratic schemes, frighten the public with the Communist bogey, and gain popular support for the cold war. The McCarthyites succeeded in frightening and deceiving large sections of the public, including workers. They succeeded, in the first place, because of the “pie in the sky” which McCarthy and his myrmidons promised the small businessmen, farmers, veterans and workers by wiping out corruption in the government; and in the second place because, as Supreme Court Justice William Douglas wrote, people were afraid of losing their jobs, afraid of the investigations, afraid of being pilloried. The Communist Party pointed out that McCarthyism aimed to smash the labor movement, to further enslave the Negro people, to stir up racism and anti-Semitism, to gag the young generation, and to wipe out all vestiges of liberty.¹

In 1953, McCarthy instigated a campaign to ban “subversive” books. In an address at Dartmouth College, President Eisenhower condemned this venture, and urged the students not to join the book burners. But McCarthy was not to be stopped. In the spring of 1954, he began an investigation into the activities of Defense and State Departments’ employees.

With respect to the State Department, McCarthy maintained that he had a list of 205 names of persons that were known to

¹ See *Political Affairs*, April 1954, pp. 8-9.

the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless were still working and shaping the policy of the State Department.¹ He accused the Eisenhower administration of harboring spies in the Army and State Department, at the same time adding certain Republicans to his list of “traitors”.

Even the Protestant Church came into McCarthy’s line of fire. Many Protestant ministers were accused, if not of being Communists, at least of sympathy with communism and preaching certain of its principles. The struggle against the “Communist menace” waged by McCarthy and others of like mind—Harold Velde, member of the Un-American Activities Committee, for example—found support among the clergy. False testimony, provocations and denunciations, in a word, all the attributes of political reaction characteristic of McCarthyism, were seen in the campaign to drive out undesirables from the churches.

A protest movement against McCarthy began to unfold across the nation. Progressive forces in the labor movement came out with exposures of McCarthyism, and resolutions denouncing McCarthyism were passed at many union conventions. The ILWU convention in April 1953, in San Francisco, declared: “Senator McCarthy has become a major political figure in the United States because of his leadership of the pack which is ‘saving’ America.”

“We have recognized, in the past couple of years, how this gimmick of communism which has been exploited by the interests of power and privilege in our country has frightened even some of our own members from speaking out.

“At union meetings, where in the past everyone felt free to use the democratic structure to have his say and—if nothing more—at least to blow off some steam, there has been a change. Conventions and caucuses too have shown that some members, in addition to their reluctance to protest on the job have carried this fear into the top policy-forming bodies of the ILWU. And it’s understandable; a single speech might cost a man his Coast Guard pass, result in his denaturalization and deportation from the United States....

¹ See Eric F. Goldman, *The Crucial Decade. America, 1945-1955*, New York., 1956, pp. 141-42.

"The energies of the ILWU and whatever strength the union can muster must be directed today to protect the rights of the rank and file to speak up, to protect the job security of the members regardless of race, color, creed or belief, and to rid the members of the inhibiting fear which has eaten into our ranks as a result of the war, the inflation and the witch hunts."¹

In a letter to the AUCCTU, dated January 25, 1954, Leon Straus, executive secretary of the Fur and Leather Workers Union, wrote:

"The repressions in our country against trade unionists and those who desire peace continue without abatement. At the present time, the President of our Union is under indictment on charges of having violated the Taft-Hartley Law. His trial begins next month, and so it is with many other trade unionists. Nevertheless, a section of labor is fighting back.

"On January 6th, a Committee of Trade Union Veterans ... organized a meeting that took place as a public trial of Senator McCarthy.... This meeting was so successful that it completely filled the St. Nicholas Arena to overflowing.... There were close to 7,000 people present, and they roundly condemned this Senator and found him guilty of crimes against the American people, against peace and humanity. This meeting was organized by the initiative of many people in our Union and other unions. This was a highly successful challenge to reaction and will help in many ways the continuing fight for the best interests of the American people for peace."²

A convention of the Electrical Workers, held in New York in October 1954, demanded a halt to political persecution, and the abolishment of such bodies as the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Senate Jenner and McCarthy committees.

A resolution of the 73rd annual convention of the AFL in Los Angeles, in September 1954, deplored McCarthy's conduct as unworthy of American traditions. It pointed out that from

¹ *Proceedings of the Tenth Biennial Convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. Twentieth Anniversary of the ILWU*, San Francisco, April 6 to 11, 1953, pp. 40-41.

² The October Revolution Central State Archives, Moscow.

the day he entered the Senate in 1946 he had voted against labor on every important issue, including such things as the minimum wage, social security, housing construction, the Taft-Hartley Act, education, taxes and civil rights. The New York CIO Council, in the spring of 1954, denounced the unwillingness of the Eisenhower administration to curb McCarthy.¹ The International Typographical Union's newspaper, *Labor's Daily*, came out with stringent articles against McCarthyism.

The United Automobile Workers also lashed out against McCarthyism. At its conventions and meetings, the workers demanded a halt to McCarthy's dangerous activities. *The Railway Clerk*, organ of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, in its issue of December 1, 1953 described the McCarthyites as "incipient American fascists" who "will stop at nothing to accomplish their purpose."² Similar comments were made in other labor papers.

Thus, there were more than enough resolutions and statements condemning McCarthy. What was lacking, however, was action and struggle. A characteristic example of this was the campaign to recall McCarthy, organized by a number of unions in Wisconsin in the summer of 1954. In two months' time it was able to collect only 335,000 signatures, not enough to result in the calling of a special election.³ The organizers of the drive could not muster enough people or influence to complete the job. In the opinion of Carey McWilliams, editor of the *Nation* magazine, the unions were indecisive in the struggle against McCarthyism because so many AFL and CIO members were under the influence of McCarthy's fabrications about a "Communist threat" in the United States.

Another reason lay in the double-dealing practised by labor leaders. James Carey was one example. In April 1953, he declared at Harvard University in Boston that McCarthyism should be fought because it threatened the existence of the trade unions and freedom of thought. Yet Carey himself preached anti-communism no less cynically than McCarthy.

¹ *Political Affairs*, May 1954, p. 44.

² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

³ *Labour Monthly* (London), February 1956, p. 83.

Speaking at a meeting of the employers at the Hotel Astor in New York, he said: "...in the last war, we joined with the Communists to fight the fascists. In another war, we will join the fascists to defeat the Communists."¹ Carey's statement caused an outburst of indignation among many progressive workers. It also embarrassed, momentarily, the leaders of the CIO unions whom Carey was representing at the Hotel Astor conference. But they were displeased only with the manner in which he blurted out his anti-Communist convictions.

In essence, Meany, Dubinsky, Carey and others supported McCarthy's anti-communism and witch hunt. If they did ultimately come to denounce McCarthy, they did so largely because he had gone too far, jeopardizing their own well-being. Another important reason for condemning McCarthy was the indignation expressed by progressive labor forces over the witch hunts, particularly since not only broad sections of the working people, but also progressive public, political and church figures, military circles and Democratic congressmen were also demanding that McCarthy be bridled and an end be put to the McCarthyite hysteria. But the fact remains, as Sidney Lens has pointed out, that "the leaders of social unionism [the CIO leaders—*Auth.*] were among the last to speak out against McCarthyism—and only after it had been generally discredited—rather than the first".²

McCarthy's activity finally incurred the displeasure of the Eisenhower administration and the National Association of Manufacturers. It was not surprising that the Senate deemed it necessary to take some action against him. It came in the form of charges of embezzling public funds, for which there were good grounds. As a senator, McCarthy received a salary of \$15,000 a year, yet after four years of heading the Senate Permanent Committee on Investigations he already had about \$200,000 in his bank account. After McCarthy six times refused to appear before the Senate to give an accounting of his financial affairs, he was charged with "contempt of the

¹ William Z. Foster, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, New York, 1951, p. 546.

² Sidney Lens, *The Crisis of American Labor*, New York, 1959, p. 213.

Senate". On December 2, 1954, the Senate, by a vote of 67 to 22, condemned him for conduct "contrary to senatorial traditions". This notwithstanding, McCarthy continued to serve in the Senate until his death in 1957. His political death came earlier when even his confederates turned away from him.

The influence of McCarthyism was an important factor in Congress, which from the beginning of 1953, now with a new composition, set about to consider anti-labor bills no less reactionary than those already passed. In January and February, congressional committees began considering bills that would outlaw the Communist Party, throw Communists into concentration camps, and dismiss men from their jobs for association with so-called subversive organizations. In March, Senator Lucas Scott (Dem., Illinois) came forth with a proposal to speed up action on bills that would outlaw industry-wide collective bargaining, strikes and unions.

A bill introduced by Senator John Butler (Rep., Maryland) in the spring of 1953 provided that the Attorney General and the Subversive Activities Control Board could outlaw any union which they decided was "dominated, directed or controlled by any individual or individuals ... who are or ever have been a member or members of the Communist Party, or of any Communist-action organization".¹ Moreover, Butler proposed that such a union should be outlawed as soon as the SACB charges were brought against it.²

The beginning of 1954 was marked by new efforts to outlaw the Communist Party, paralyze the strike struggle and hamstring the labor unions. In his message to Congress in January 1954, the President recommended that any person convicted under the Smith Act of teaching and advocating the overthrow of the US Government by force and violence be deprived of his American citizenship.

In January 1954, the administration introduced a number of amendments to the Taft-Hartley Act into Congress. That this law would be reviewed was one of the Republicans' main election promises. They implied before the elections that this

¹ *March of Labor*, October-November 1953, p. 14.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

review would correspond to the interests of the workers and the demands of social justice. In fact, however, the amendments were not in keeping with these statements. They provided, in particular, for the interference of the National Labor Relations Board in the procedure wherein workers discuss and vote on the question of calling a strike.

The drive by the federal and legal authorities against the progressive forces continued. In February 1953, a New York district court sentenced thirteen leaders of the Communist Party to various terms in jail. In October 1954, a court of appeals upheld the sentence. In 1953, more than one hundred prominent labor figures were given prison sentences or were on trial or under investigation. Trials of trade union leaders took place in Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle.

In the autumn of 1953, charges of sedition were brought against Communists in the states of Washington and Pennsylvania. Then, too, an attempt was made on the life of Robert Thompson, a prominent Communist Party figure who was serving a jail sentence at the time. A criminal imprisoned in the same jail struck Thompson on the head with a piece of pipe. The *Daily Worker* characterized this attack as a political act generated by the wave of reaction and war hysteria.

In December 1953, after three years of legal battles, the International Workers Order was dissolved as an organization by order of the New York courts, and some of its officers were subjected to deportations as suspicious persons. We spoke earlier here about the democratic activity of this organization and its role during World War II. Prior to its dissolution, the Order had some 1,700 lodges in 21 states, a membership of 162,000 in 1950, and insurance operations amounting to \$110 million.¹

The powers-that-be concentrated most of all on staging anti-Communist trials. As Brownell advised the President, since July 1948 the FBI had arrested over 140 Communist Party leaders on Smith Act charges, 108 of whom were convicted and sentenced to various terms in jail. Besides this, about 400 Communists, Americans of foreign origin, had been deported.

¹ *Labor Fact Book* 12, New York, 1955, p. 59.

To step up the persecution of the Communist Party and left-wing figures in the labor movement, the 83rd Congress amended the McCarran-Wood Act of 1950 by passing, on August 19, 1954, the Communist Control Act of 1954 (also known as the Humphrey-Butler Act). Eisenhower signed the bill into law on August 24. The new Act declared that the Communist Party of the United States was "not entitled to any of the rights, privileges, and immunities attendant upon legal bodies created under the jurisdiction of the laws of the United States". Paragraph 2 of the law declared the Communist Party of the United States to be "an instrumentality of a conspiracy to overthrow the Government of the United States.... Therefore, the Communist Party should be outlawed."¹ Further, it said that Communists should be prosecuted as members of Communist-action groups in accordance with the McCarran Act. They were barred from government or defense plant employment, and denied passports for travel abroad. They were obliged to register with the Department of Justice or face a five-year prison term and a 10,000-dollar fine.

The Act contained a new definition of "Communist-infiltrated organizations". The term meant "any organization in the United States ... which is substantially directed, dominated, or controlled by an individual or individuals who are ... knowingly giving aid or support to a Communist-action organization, a Communist foreign government, or the world Communist movement...".² Any trade union found to fit this definition would lose its right to petition the Labor Relations Board on collective bargaining matters. This provision could be applied, in particular, against the unions expelled from the CIO in 1949 and 1950. The democratic press wrote that Congress had passed an unconstitutional law dictated by the interests of big business and carefully prepared by the NAM and the Chamber of Commerce. Any union pursuing an independent line could be suddenly branded as "Communist infiltrated",³ thus giving the monopolies the chance to revive company organizations and speed-up conditions.

¹ CR, August 16, 1954, p. 14606.

² *Ibid.*

³ *March of Labor*, October 1954, p. 11.

The persecution of democratic organizations increased. In 1955, the Subversive Activities Control Board ordered the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, the Jefferson School of Social Science, the Civil Rights Congress and the Labor Youth League to register as Communist-front organizations. The last three subsequently went out of existence.

In 1953 and 1954 alone, several hundred thousand persons were subjected to loyalty checks; of these, thousands remained under suspicion, living from day to day in expectation of losing their jobs.¹ *The New York Times* reported: "At least 9,394 persons have been dismissed from jobs or denied clearance. At least 15,928 more have had cases end with resignations or withdrawals while unfavorable marks remained on their records."² The Attorney General's list contained 255 so-called subversive organizations, while the House Un-American Activities Committee, not to be outdone, compiled a list of 733 such organizations, including all that had ever been called before a federal or state committee.

One of the most inhuman manifestations of reactionary policy was the racist violence perpetrated against Negroes. In the first seven years after World War II, over 3,000 Negroes were killed by decision of the courts or without trial, as a result of attacks by the Ku Klux Klan or other racist groups.

There were many cases of reprisals against Negroes during those years. Willie McGee in Laurel, Mississippi, and seven Negroes in Martinsville, Virginia, were executed on the standard charge of raping a white woman. The burning and bombing of Negro homes and churches became not infrequent occurrences in the southern states. In Louisiana, John Mitchell, a Negro, was killed in November 1951, because he insisted on exercising his right to vote. In December 1951, racists blew up the house of a Negro by the name of William Moore in Florida. In California, the homes of members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were burned. During Truman's presidency, 69 attacks against Negroes were made in various states from 1949 to 1952 alone.

¹ Dean Acheson, *A Democrat Looks at His Party*, New York, 1955, p. 169; *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, July 1957, p. 15.

² *The New York Times*, July 9, 1956.



Police repressions against Blacks

The Negro question became increasingly acute. Discrimination against the Negro population was practised not only in the economic sphere, but in the political sphere to no lesser extent. The poll tax in the South and the movement for its abolition gave convincing proof of this. In the 1952 elections, the Republicans promised to put an end to segregation in the District of Columbia if they came to power. In an effort to undertake something in this direction, the Supreme Court ruled on May 17, 1954 that segregation of Negro pupils in the schools was unconstitutional. However, this decision produced little effect, and the persecution of Negroes kept growing.

Such was the situation created by the political regime of a "free society". Such were the conditions which the magnates of American capitalism considered necessary to carry out their program of militarizing the economy.

McCarthyism was a veritable ulcer of bourgeois democracy, testifying to its serious ailments. Anti-communism, the persecution of democratic forces in the labor movement, the anti-labor laws, and the suppression of strikes—all these were signs of the crisis of bourgeois democracy.

CHAPTER XI

LABOR'S FIGHT ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT.
THE AFL-CIO MERGER

After the partial crisis in 1949, industrial activity began to pick up, as a result of which employment grew and unemployment decreased. This may be seen from the following figures for 1949-1955 (in millions)¹:

Table 4

Year	Workers employed in all nonagri- cultural fields	Fully unemployed	Per cent of all wage earners unemployed
1949	50.4	3.7	5.9
1950	52.2	3.3	5.3
1951	53.7	2.1	3.3
1952	54.2	1.9	3.1
1953	55.4	1.9	2.9
1954	54.4	3.6	5.6
1955	56.2	2.9	4.4

Statistics indicate that the employment level varied from industry to industry. While it rose in defense-related industries, it fell somewhat in the textile, shoe and leather, and food industries. Furthermore, hourly wage rates and weekly and annual earnings in industries producing durable goods and especially in the defense industry, were higher than in consumer goods industries unrelated to defense. An even

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1962*, Washington, 1962, p. 215. Data on the labor force include not only industrial and office workers, i.e., wage earners, but also other groups of Americans living on unearned incomes (stockholders, enterprise owners, company boards of directors, etc.).

greater difference existed between wages in the defense industries and wages in the trade and service fields.

Discrimination because of race and nationality was another reason for differences in living standards. Negro, Mexican, and Puerto Rican workers were, as before, at the lowest level. Such factors as the government's tax policy and working and safety conditions also had an effect on the economic condition of American workers. The US aggression in Korea was used as a pretext to further mobilize industry in accordance with the Defense Production Act of September 8, 1950. This act conferred authority upon the President in matters relating to the supply of raw and other materials to the war industry; the regulation of labor relations, wages and prices; and the distribution of war orders.

In the first months of the Korean war, a number of agencies were set up under the War Board. Their task was to regulate the economy in the interests of big business. The Board was headed by one of the most prominent captains of industry of those years, General Electric President Charles Wilson. An Office of Price Stabilization and a Wage Stabilization Board were created in late 1950, in accordance with the Defense Production Act. Theoretically, they were called upon to do what their names implied, but actually, the OPS did nothing to prevent prices and, consequently, the cost of living, from rising. On the other hand, the Wage Stabilization Board carried out a definite policy of wage control.

On January 26, 1951, the Truman administration ordered the imposition of wage and price controls. Trade unions were forbidden to demand more than a 10 per cent wage increase over the January 1950 level. This was accompanied by a ban on price increases for consumer goods above the January 1951 level. It is not difficult to see the resemblance between Truman's wage stabilization and the notorious Little Steel formula of 1942.

The AFL, CIO and independent trade unions came out against this second edition of the formula. In March 1951, they formed a coordinating United Labor Policy Committee, which denounced the ways and means used to stabilize wages. A Declaration on Principles issued by the Committee stressed that while wages were controlled, prices in fact were not. But

the attempt to secure a united labor front failed because of the conciliatory line taken by AFL leaders. Instead of fighting for working-class demands, all they did was talk about "equal sacrifices" by all strata of American society.

The authors of the Declaration reproached Congress for ignoring the principle of "equal sacrifices", and advanced seven points demanding the establishment of effective price control, an excess profits tax, a cut in taxes on low incomes, etc. These points had already been set forth during World War II, but in the wartime conditions the unions were obliged to hold back considerably as they supported Roosevelt's program to fight inflation. Now, under Truman, no groundless declarations could substitute for militant trade union action. But militant action is just what the United Labor Policy Committee did not want to take, for it was made up of opportunists bogged down in behind-the-scenes deals with employers.

The Committee did not call the masses to support its line, in the first place because it had no policy that was in their interests, and in the second place because it feared they might display too much initiative. Evaluating the Committee's activities, the April 1951 meeting of the Communist Party National Committee stressed that the trade union leaders were clumsily trying to hide their latest capitulation to monopoly behind their phony "equal sacrifices" catchword.¹ Their economic opportunism was actually leading to inactivity, and in a great many cases bordered on an unwillingness to organize a truly mass struggle of the workers for their class interests. On August 5 of the same year, the AFL representatives withdrew from the United Labor Policy Committee, thereby putting an end to illusions of unity. This move determined the Committee's fate; it ceased to exist, having failed to accomplish the tasks it was assigned.

The condition of the workers was aggravated by inflation. In the first half of 1953, Eisenhower lifted even the purely formal price controls, and on July 31, rent controls were also removed. Landlords immediately took advantage of this, with the result that over the first half of the 1950s rents went up by 50-60 per cent, chiefly for low-income families. The mortgage debt

¹ *Daily Worker*, April 13, 1951.

increased from \$33.3 billion to \$99 billion between 1948 and 1956.¹

Besides this, taxes went up. In the 1952/53 fiscal year they totalled \$92.6 billion, or almost twice as much as during the war years.² The income tax law that went into effect in October 1950, provided for a 14 per cent tax increase on annual incomes of \$100,000 or more, and a 20 per cent increase on incomes of up to \$3,000. In 1954, families with incomes of \$3,000 to \$3,500 were paying \$1,055 a year, or 30 per cent of their annual incomes.³

Before the Korean war it took an average of \$75 a week, or \$3,900 a year, to support a family of four, whereas in 1951 the figures were, respectively, \$81.60 and \$4,242. In 1953, according to Federal Reserve Board data, of the 55 million families taken into account, about 38 million, or 69 per cent, had annual incomes considerably below the official minimum subsistence level. One-fourth of the families earned less than \$2,000 a year.⁴ In other words, these families were living in poverty.

In September 1953, workers in the manufacturing industries were making an average of \$71.42 a week, or \$3,718 a year, while the lowest wages in the shoe industry were \$45.41 a week, or \$2,361 a year.⁵

As a result of the strike struggle, however, average annual wages in the manufacturing industry rose from \$3,214 in 1950 to \$4,135 in 1955.⁶

Wage levels, however, differed greatly from industry to industry and between various groups and categories of workers. The steelworkers' union pointed out in 1952 that the average hourly wage in steel was \$1.31 (\$1.21 in the South), or only \$52.40 a week, which called for an increase of 67.5 cents per hour (and not 15 cents as indicated in the 1951 collective

¹ *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, July 1950, August 1950, June 1957.

² *Economic Notes*, September 1952.

³ *The Burden of Taxes*, by Labor Research Association, New York, 1956, p. 16; *Факты о положении трудящихся в США (1953-54)*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 27-28.

⁴ *Economic Notes*, December 1954, p. 6.

⁵ *Business Statistics*, Washington, 1955, pp. 69, 72.

⁶ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1955, p. 299 (calculated by the author).

bargaining agreement) in order to bring earnings up to a level adequate to cover the expenses in the budget compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The average wage rate for the first 16 of the 32 wage categories was \$1.68 an hour, or \$67.20 a week and \$3,494 a year; in other words, 84.6 per cent of the subsistence minimum. And this group included even skilled workers: crane operators, gas welders, excavator operators, locomotive engineers, furnace operators and so on.¹

In 1953, there were 544,600 production workers employed in the steel industry. Of these, 370,000, or 70 per cent, were in the first 10-12 wage categories (semiskilled and unskilled workers). The difference between categories 10 and 32 was \$1.10 in 1951, and \$1.21 in 1952-53. In 1954, wage rates were \$57.20 a week, or \$2,974 a year, for the lowest category; \$90.40 a week, or \$4,700 a year, for the middle category; and \$125.60 a week, or \$6,531 a year, for the highest.

Thus, workers in the latter two groups had relatively high wages, especially those in the top skill bracket. This pattern was characteristic of many industries producing durable goods, where there was, at the same time, a high percentage of organized workers. In 1950, for instance, the average wage at the auto plants in Detroit was \$1.78 an hour, while workers in the top skill categories received from \$2.50 to \$4.00 an hour.² The same picture obtained in the electrical machinery and equipment, aircraft, and transport equipment industries. On the whole, wages of skilled workers in most branches of heavy industry (there were about ten million of them in 1954) averaged from \$80 to \$125 a week, or \$4,000 to \$6,500 a year. However, in such industries as, for example, food, tobacco, textile, apparel, lumber and wood-working, the average wage in 1954 and 1955 was one-half to one-third that of highly skilled workers in the iron and steel, automobile, electrical and other industries. Obviously, the workers in the lower wage bracket were in a tough situation.

As for the condition of Negro workers, the Committee on Segregation Questions, Washington, reported that most of

¹ *Political Affairs*, June 1952, p. 42.

² Gus Hall, *Peace Can Be Won. Report to the 15th Constitutional Convention, Communist Party USA*, New York, 1951, pp. 32-33; *Daily Worker*, February 14, 1955.

them were still employed in low-pay jobs. In 1952, of 3.5 million working Negro men, 1.5 million were unskilled workers. Twenty-three per cent of working Negroes had jobs as manual laborers, while among whites only seven per cent were in this category. Only four per cent of working Negro women were office workers, as compared with a 30 per cent figure for white women. On the other hand, 58 per cent of the working Negro women were employed as domestic servants.

A sharp wage differential continued to exist between white and Negro workers. The average annual wages of Negroes in the years 1950-1953 were a little over one-half those of white workers, and Negro women made only one-fifth as much as white workers.¹ In 1950, the average annual income of a Negro family was \$1,869, or 54 per cent of the average income of \$3,445 of a white family.

In the early 1950s, automation became an important factor in production and the cause of growing concern to workers. With the development of automation came even greater speedup and increasing layoffs of "redundant" workers. At the United States Steel mill in Morrisville, New York, for example, the capacity of the open-hearth furnaces was increased from 200 to 410 tons per furnace per melt, while the number of workers per furnace remained the same. In the first postwar decade, automation led to the dismissal of over 300,000 persons in the textile industry, and 200,000 in the electrical and radio industry. In the coal industry, the number of workers was reduced by more than half between 1947 and 1957. About 400,000 miners lost their jobs as a result of new technology.

In these years automation and intensification of production brought about the gradual disappearance of obsolete trades and "redundant" jobs, displacement of workers over 40-45 years of age, and changes in the structure of the industrial proletariat in terms of skills. An average of 400 to 600 new trades and professions appeared in the American economy annually.²

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, June 1953, p. 600.

² Р. И. ЦВЫЛАСВ, *Социально-экономические последствия технического прогресса в США*, Moscow, 1960, pp. 136-37.

It should be noted that unemployment averaged approximately five per cent of the civilian labor force during 1954, as against 2.4 per cent in 1953.¹

Such were the facts characterizing the economic position of the workers in the first half of the 1950s. Yet, in the two-and-a-half years of the American aggression in Korea, the monopolies reaped \$107 billion in profits (before taxes), or only \$7 billion less than in the entire five years of World War II.²

The war in Korea stimulated a growth of industrial production in the United States that continued right up to 1953, at which time the volume of production exceeded the 1948 level by 33.8 per cent. The Korean armistice led to a drop in the production level in 1954. The production index, according to Federal Reserve Board data, taking 1957-1959 as 100, rose from 64.7 in 1949 to 91.3 in 1953. It fell to 85.8 in 1954, only to rise again in 1955 to a high of 96.6.

Employers expected that while the war was on in Korea, the same situation would obtain in industry as existed during World War II. They thought that the 5.4 million workers employed in war production (the end of 1951) would not strike.³

But contrary to their expectations, the number of strikes, the number of workers involved and man-days lost in the major industries all increased in the first half of the 1950s, as can be seen from the following figures⁴:

	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Work stoppages	4,843	4,737	5,117	5,091	3,468	4,320
Workers involved (in thousands)	2,410	2,220	3,540	2,400	1,530	2,650
Man-days idle (in millions)	38.8	22.9	59.1	28.3	22.6	28.2

Strikes took place in most of the country's industrial centers, and involved auto workers, teamsters, steelworkers, electricians, machinists, ship builders, chemical workers, construction

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, February 1955, p. 176.

² *March of Labor*, May 1953, p. 11 (calculations by the author).

³ *Monthly Labor Review*, March 1952, p. 263.

⁴ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1962, p. 243.

workers, seamen, communications workers, public utilities and atomic plant workers. Tension mounted throughout the country.

As early as the spring of 1950, mass strikes broke out on the railroads. The Railroad Brotherhoods were demanding a 40-hour week and higher wages, but the companies refused to negotiate. In response, the locomotive engineers on the Rock Island and Pacific RR of Chicago struck in May, followed by the switchmen in June.¹

Truman stepped in with an appeal to terminate the strikes in the national interest. However, in August, railroad workers struck in Chicago, Washington, St. Louis, Alexandria (Virginia) and other key centers. The companies asked the President to establish government control over the railroads, and on August 25, on orders of President Truman, the army seized all railroads.

In Chicago, Washington and Cleveland the courts issued injunctions against "illegal" strikes. The President declared a state of emergency, and the strikes were temporarily halted. In an effort to prevent a further spread of unrest, some companies said they were prepared to raise wages. Thus, the railroad workers forced the government and the companies to make concessions. Their demands were met. Army control over the railroads was lifted in May 1952.

The first half of 1951 saw a series of textile strikes. In one of the conflicts, the American Woollen Company refused to meet the demands of the Textile Workers Union (CIO) for a wage increase of 15 cents per hour, as a result of which 70,000 workers at 160 mills in the Atlantic Coast states went out on strike in February. Soon, however, the company granted a 12-cent-an-hour rise and agreed to review wage rates in the future in response to changes in the cost of living; that is, it virtually accepted the principle of an automatic cost-of-living wage adjustment.

The strike movement did not wane in the second half of 1951. One of the biggest strikes at that time involved 100,000 workers in the copper industry. A court order was issued to put off the strike for 80 days. The strike was halted, but the union,

¹ *Daily People's World*, February 6, 7, 8, 9, 1951.

meeting in convention, decided to renew it after the 80-day period had elapsed. The firm stand taken by the union and the workers' determination compelled the companies to make concessions. Kennecott Copper, for example, signed a one-year contract which provided for a wage raise of 15 cents per hour and a payment of 4.5 cents per hour into a pension fund.

At about the same time, a strike of 30,000 longshoremen in New York and Boston began. The dispute centered around certain objectionable points in the contract. In 1950, 60 per cent of the longshoremen on the Atlantic Coast worked less than 800 hours a year. The contract, however, stipulated that a worker had to put in at least 700 hours a year to qualify for certain welfare benefits. The strikers were demanding that this minimum be reduced to 500 hours. Even at that, half of the longshoremen would not qualify for the benefits.

Other demands were for a 25-cent-an-hour rise, a guaranteed eight-hour workday and certain fringe benefits. The president of the union, Joseph Ryan, used every means to suppress the workers who stood in opposition to their leadership. He even brought in gangsters, and police intervened in the conflict.

Although the strike failed, the East Coast longshoremen long remembered it, and later demanded Ryan's ouster.

The total number of workers involved in strikes during the first 18 months of the war in Korea reached 3.5 million. The year 1952 saw the greatest upsurge of the strike movement since 1946. In the beginning of that year, there were strikes of teamsters, locomotive engineers and railway conductors, telegraph and telephone operators, and oil refinery workers, involving, in all, tens of thousands of workers. By May 1, 1952, a total of 887,000 workers, including 650,000 steelworkers, were on strike. The steelworkers' strike was the longest and toughest since the 1919 steel strike. It drew worldwide attention.¹

The standard of living of the steelworkers had deteriorated. In 1952, about 60 per cent of them were making less than the subsistence minimum.²

¹ *Daily People's World*, May 3, 1952; *Political Affairs*, January 1952, pp. 38-50, June 1952, p. 42.

² *Political Affairs*, June 1952, pp. 42-43; *Daily Worker*, August 25, 1952.

In negotiating a new contract in early 1952, the United Steelworkers of America demanded a wage increase of 24 cents per hour, eight paid holidays, time and one-half and double time for work on Saturdays and Sundays, and an increase of shift premiums to 10 and 15 cents over and above the 24-cent-an-hour raise demanded for day shifts. The union declared that it would not tolerate violation of the hiring rules that were based on the closed shop principle. The steelworkers also sought elimination of the 10-cent-an-hour Southern differential. And finally, the union demanded improvements in safety conditions. The steel companies rejected these demands.¹ The union had no other alternative than to call a general strike. It set April 9 as the deadline.

The government immediately intervened. Truman ordered government control over the nation's steel mills to be established on April 8. The companies filed a complaint in court, claiming that the seizure was illegal. In the meantime, the Wage Stabilization Board proposed that the sides agree to a compromise 17.5-cent-an-hour wage raise. The union leaders regarded this proposal as a way to settle the dispute, but the companies were adamant in their refusal to raise wages. On April 28, a federal court ruled that the government's seizure of the steel industry was illegal and control must be lifted.

Murray and his assistants still hoped to avoid a strike, telling the workers that the court's decision would be overruled by the Supreme Court. However, when on June 2 the latter upheld the federal court's ruling, the union had no other choice but to call a strike in the steel industry.

The strike lasted for almost two months. It ended on July 25 after the companies made concessions. The new contract provided for an increase of the hourly wage from 12.6 to 16 cents, employer contributions to a welfare fund, paid holidays (for the first time in the steel industry), and a five-cent reduction in the North-South hourly wage differential.

The strike had widespread repercussions, for almost 85 per cent of the nation's steel mills were shut down by it. In the two months of idleness, US industry suffered a shortfall of 17 million tons of steel at a time when the annual output was 110

¹ *Political Affairs*, June 1952, pp. 40-41.

million tons. The overall losses from the strike amounted to 23.8 million man-days lost, out of a total of 59.1 million lost in all strikes in 1952.

In August 1952, national attention was attracted to a three-month strike of 30,000 workers at the farm machinery plants of International Harvester Company in Chicago and other cities.

American workers well remember the International Harvester. It was during a strike at this company in 1886, when it was called the McCormick Harvester Company, that its owners instigated one of the most vicious provocations in American labor history, leading to the tragic events at the Haymarket Square in Chicago. Now, using the same methods to fight the strike in 1952, the new owners crashed down on the union, aiming to destroy it and reduce the workers' wages.

Police dispersed the picket lines, beating and arresting pickets. The bourgeois press baited and slandered the strikers, and called for harsh measures to be taken against them. The *Chicago Tribune*, mouthpiece of the McCormick publishing company, even demanded death sentences for the strike leaders. One of these leaders, Harry Ward, a Negro, was arrested and tried on a frame-up charge of killing a strikebreaker. He was saved from the electric chair only because the United Electrical Workers, a leading force in the strike, organized a broad campaign in his defense.

The House Un-American Activities Committee came to Chicago just at the time of the strike. But this did not intimidate the workers; in fact, the building where it was holding its hearings was picketed. Among the strikers was John Bernard, one of the leaders of the Chicago local of the electrical workers union, a former member of the US House of Representatives, and an eminent figure in the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota in the 1930s. The committee called Bernard to testify before it, hoping to discredit him in the eyes of the workers. But the interrogation backfired on the committee. In the presence of many workers, Bernard lambasted the committee and exposed the aims of its arrival in Chicago. Other unionists called up before the committee spoke out just as boldly and directly. The result was that the committee was compelled to terminate its hearings and return

to Washington ahead of schedule. The plans to reduce wages and destroy the union organizations at the International Harvester enterprises failed.¹

In January 1953, the Republicans took over the reins of government for the first time in twenty years. At about the same time, new leaders rose to power in the AFL and CIO due to the deaths in 1952 of AFL president Green and CIO president Murray. The new presidents, George Meany and Walter Reuther, both hastened to declare their willingness to "cooperate" with the new administration in Washington. At the same time, the statements they made about having the Taft-Hartley Act amended were designed to instill in the minds of workers the hope that Eisenhower would carry out his promises in this respect. The conciliatory policy of the union leadership and the threat of the Taft-Hartley Act combined to affect the scope of strike action in 1953. Although the number of strikes was no smaller than in 1952, they involved fewer participants and were of shorter duration.

The strike struggle in 1953 was characterized largely by the growth of wildcat strikes, that is, strikes not sanctioned by the central union leadership. Two hundred such strikes were registered in the iron and steel industry alone.

In 1955, due to a renewed upswing in industry, the overall wage fund of blue- and white-collar workers and the purchasing power of the population rose somewhat in comparison with 1954. However, as contracts with major monopolies expired and the cost of living continued to rise, the unions demanded increases in wages, pension funds and unemployment benefits, and better working conditions. A total of 4,320 strikes took place that year, involving 2,650,000 workers and resulting in 28 million man-days idle.²

In assessing the strike struggle of the American working class between 1950 and 1955, it should be noted that its characteristic features were, as in the preceding years, its broad scope and mass nature, as well as the predominance of economic demands. The issues had mainly to do with wages, the size of unemployment benefits and pensions, working conditions and length of the work day or week. There were no

¹ *Daily Worker*, November 17, 1952.

² *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1962, p. 243.

political strikes. There were no big industry-wide strikes during this period, since still in force were contracts concluded between 1950 and 1952 under which the unions had agreed not to strike for the duration of the contracts. The strike movement was also restrained by anti-labor legislation (the Taft-Hartley, McCarran-Walter and other laws) and the baiting and persecution of union figures.

Nonetheless, the strike movement in the first half of the 1950s indicated increasing contradictions between the working class, especially its low-paid section, and the monopolies.

Back in 1927, members of the first American worker delegation ever to visit the Soviet Union explained that it was not easy to cultivate even trade-unionist thinking in the American masses, to instill in them even an elementary understanding of the need for workers to unite in trade unions to defend their economic interests. But much had changed since then. History had not stood still. The widespread emergence of mass unions, and the scope and force of the strike movement, showed that American workers were becoming more and more active. Indications of this were also found in the speeches and resolutions at union conventions and conferences on urgent economic questions and the problems of war and peace.

At the same time, bourgeois propaganda and the opportunism of many labor leaders acted as a brake on the development of the workers' class consciousness. Nonetheless, this development, although slow, did take place. It was not without alarm that the bourgeoisie watched the changes in the awareness of workingmen. Lenin summed up this phenomenon when he wrote: "The ruling classes all over the world are particularly apprehensive of the changes that are taking place in the trade union movement.... But every capitalist sees the trade unions, and knows that they unite millions of workers and that the machinery of capitalism is bound to break down, unless the capitalists control them through the leaders who call themselves socialists but pursue the policy of the capitalists. This they know, feel and sense."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 116-17.

The political consciousness of the American workingmen developed in their struggle against the employers, above all during mass strikes. The strike struggle runs through the whole history of the labor movement in the USA, and in the postwar period the number of workers involved in strikes every year was never below the two-million mark.

And yet one of the main obstacles to the labor movement was the contradiction between the enormous scope of strike actions and their lack of an independent, working-class strategy. Because of the opportunist policy of right-wing leaders, the labor movement in the USA lagged considerably behind the labor movement in many other capitalist countries in terms of organization and ideology. Labor organizations were split up into different trade union centers that were frequently at loggerheads with each other. Moreover, about two-thirds of the American working people were not unionized.

Progressive unionists had long sought a united labor movement, but this urge was particularly strong in the postwar period, when it became clear that none of major labor federations could, by itself, effectively counter the monopolies' offensive against the vital rights of labor. West Coast longshoremen at their union convention in April 1951 and steelworkers at theirs in September 1954 both stressed the urgent necessity of unity for American labor.

A resolution on labor unity adopted by the United Steelworkers convention said that unity would release the energies of the entire American labor movement for the larger effort to organize the unorganized, and that it would secure a more abundant life for the workers of America.¹ Other unions came out with similar calls.

More and more labor organizations were joining the movement for AFL and CIO unity. Their members were well aware of the need for it. They realized that the future of their unions depended on concerted action against the monopolies. The absence of unity was one reason why the strike struggle more and more often became defensive in character.

Rank-and-file unionists persistently called upon their leaders to put an end to the mutual animosity between the AFL and

¹ *Steel Labor*, October 1954.

CIO, and to stop raiding activities (union rivalry, with one union seeking to win over membership of another). From 1951 to 1953 alone, there were 1,245 cases of raiding between AFL and CIO unions, involving 350,000 workers.¹ Within the three years, the AFL filed 791 complaints with the Labor Relations Board, challenging the right of CIO unions to act as the collective bargaining agents, and the CIO filed 936 such complaints against the AFL. The AFL leaders spent \$11.5 million on organizing raids and bringing action against the CIO.²

Some unions found that if they wanted to strengthen their positions they had to unite on their own. The CIO Packinghouse Workers Union and the AFL Butchers and Slaughterhouse Workers Union, for example, merged, as did a few other AFL and CIO unions. The anti-labor policies of the monopolies increased the impulsion of organized workers toward unity of action, and this was one of the things that forced the union leaders to speed up negotiations to bring the AFL and CIO together.

It was no accident that Walter Reuther was to admit at a press conference in late October 1955 that "if the merger were up to the rank and file only, it would have occurred long ago. They have been asking for it for years, and the pressure actually came from the rank and file".³

Back in 1950, on April 4, Murray issued an appeal for unity to the AFL and the independent unions. The AFL executive council responded by appointing a committee to conduct negotiations with the CIO. In July of that year, the CIO and AFL committees met and decided to form a subcommittee made up of representatives of both labor centers. Its job was to work out recommendations on the ways and means of merger. The subcommittee expressed the hope that total unity between the AFL and CIO would be accomplished in the very near future.

In November 1950, the 12th convention of the CIO in Chicago called for further contacts between the two associa-

¹ *AFL News-Reporter*, June 4, 1953.

² *March of Labor*, August 1954, pp. 4-5.

³ *AFL News-Reporter*, October 28, 1955.

tions and expressed confidence that meetings would be resumed in the near future. The CIO leadership urged the union members to be patient, and warned of the difficulties involved in uniting the AFL, CIO, the United Mine Workers and the Railroad Brotherhoods. A convention resolution emphasized the need for new efforts to achieve the unity of the entire American labor movement.

The 70th convention of the AFL, held in San Francisco in September 1951, resolved that the "organic unity" of the American labor movement was more imperative than at any time since the split of the AFL and that negotiations with the CIO should be resumed. Persistent references by the AFL leaders to "organic unity" put the CIO leaders on guard. Speaking at the 13th convention of the CIO in November 1951 in New York, Murray argued that talks on "organic" unity might imply absorption of the CIO by the AFL and that he strongly rejected that possibility. "Unity without prior understanding on jurisdictional questions ... would not lead to peace in the labor movement," he said.¹

At the 14th convention of the CIO, held in December 1952 in Atlantic City, Walter Reuther, now president of the CIO after Murray's death that year, promised to make a determined effort to achieve unity without prejudicing the principle of industrial unionism in the mass production industries. The convention expressed confidence that organic unity would be achieved. Meany, who succeeded Green as AFL president, spoke in favor of resuming unity talks with the CIO. In early February 1953, the CIO executive board named a new committee of eleven officials headed by Reuther to meet with an AFL committee headed by Meany, to discuss unity.

After the progressive unions were expelled from the CIO, its position on domestic and especially on foreign policy differed little from that of the AFL leadership. The CIO annual conventions from 1951 to 1954 clearly showed this to be the case. For example, the 14th convention, held in Atlantic City in December 1952, passed a resolution which fully approved the US government's cold war foreign policy course.

On the eve of the unity talks, Reuther said at a press

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, December 1951, p. 671.

conference in Washington: "The CIO wants a united labor movement with all the Communists and racketeers kicked out", and recalled that the CIO had "rid itself of nine Communist unions some years ago".¹ This statement with its obvious anti-Communist emphasis attested to the fact that the top CIO and AFL leaders were wholly in tune ideologically and that they intended to effect the merger on a reactionary, anti-democratic platform.

The Communist Party was an active participant in the struggle for the unity of the working class, and the initiator of many mass actions in which various trade unions took part. At every stage of its history it waged a struggle against cleavage, exposing the advocates of craft separatism and disunity. What attitude did the party take to the events leading up to the merger of the AFL and CIO? It assessed the coming merger on the whole as an unquestionable step forward, stressing at the same time that it could do a lot for the workers if effected democratically, from below, that is, by drawing the broad masses of rank-and-file union members into the movement for unity. If, however, the merger were left up to the bureaucratic upper echelons, then it could do more harm than good.

The AFL and CIO committees first met on April 9, 1953. The AFL press reported: "Labor unity negotiations between AFL and CIO committees got off to a good start at the first meeting. The conference named a 6-man subcommittee—headed by AFL President George Meany and CIO President Walter P. Reuther—to make preliminary studies of the main problems involved and to draw up a report and agenda for the next joint meeting of the full committees to be held early next June. Chief emphasis was placed by both sides on the need for eliminating 'raiding' between rival unions....

"The first obstacle to progress of the negotiations was removed when Reuther and the other CIO representatives assured the AFL group that they had no 'prior conditions' to submit."²

At a press conference in Washington in June 1953, AFL representatives said that while the two sides had agreed on the

¹ *The CIO News*, February 9, 1953.

² *AFL News-Reporter*, April 10, 1953.

raiding issue, they had not yet reached agreement regarding the settlement of jurisdictional disputes between AFL and CIO unions. CIO representatives added that a two-year no-raiding pact would go into effect in January 1954, and that they regarded the proposed agreement as real progress toward organic unity.¹

The CIO executive board approved the agreement in August 1953, and urged the convention to ratify it in November stressing that "the elimination of raiding constitutes a necessary first condition to the achievement of unity".² The AFL executive council also approved the agreement, characterizing it as a "cease-fire". In September 1953, the 72nd convention of the AFL in St. Louis ratified the agreement, declaring that it was "the first and indispensable step toward achievement of organic unity between the AFL and CIO" and emphasizing the need of exerting trade union energy to organizing millions of unorganized workers instead of to the "costly fraternal strife involved in raiding".³

In November 1953, Reuther told the 15th convention of the CIO in Cleveland: "We seek honorable organic unity based firmly on the principles of free democratic unionism....

"In these negotiations we will not sacrifice any of the basic principles for which the CIO stands, and which are essential to the building of a strong, democratic and socially responsible labor movement."⁴ The convention instructed the CIO officials to sign the no-raiding agreement as a first step toward unity. The Unity Committee signed the agreement in Washington on December 16.

But before the agreement could go into effect, individual AFL and CIO unions had to affix their signatures to it, and this matter proceeded with some difficulty. The AFL executive council noted in February 1954 that only 40 of its 111 unions were ready to sign.⁵ At the same time, the CIO executive board said that 98 per cent of its unions had stated their readiness to

¹ *The CIO News*, June 8, 1953.

² *Ibid.*, August 24, 1953.

³ *AFL News-Reporter*, October 2, 1953.

⁴ *The CIO News*, November 16, 1953.

⁵ *Ibid.*, February 15, 1954.

sign if the AFL unions did the same.¹ On March 22, 1954, the CIO executive board expressed concern over the fact that the agreement could not go into effect because of the small number of unions that had accepted it.² Finally, on June 9, Reuther signed the document on behalf of 29 CIO unions, and Meany on behalf of 65 AFL unions, and the agreement went into effect. The unions signatory to it represented over ten million of the nation's almost sixteen million organized workers.³

Reuther called the agreement "a reflection of the growing maturity in both movements".⁴ It was a promising beginning. Clear signs of progress in the mood and conditions for unity with the CIO were shown at the 73rd convention of the AFL held in Los Angeles in September 1954. The report of the executive council advocated that "negotiations move ahead immediately toward achieving organic labor unity".⁵

The program for unity adopted by the CIO convention looked toward "fair and honorable unity with the American Federation of Labor, to a continued drive to organize the unorganized, and to domestic economic and social legislation designed to end stagnation".⁶ The convention approved the decision of the Unity Committee regarding the creation of a single trade union center, and noted that since the last convention, 102 unions had signed the no-raiding agreement (72 AFL unions and 30 CIO unions), and that raiding had virtually ceased.⁷

On February 9, 1955, the Unity Committee finally reached agreement on the creation of a single trade union center. It was announced that all AFL and CIO unions would automatically become affiliated to the new labor federation, at the same time retaining their constitutions and organizational integrity. The agreement recognized both the craft and the industrial

¹ *The CIO News*, February 15, 1954.

² *Ibid.*, May 17, 1954.

³ *Ibid.*, June 14, 1954.

⁴ *Ibid.*, July 5, 1954.

⁵ *AFL News-Reporter*, October 1, 1954.

⁶ *The CIO News*, December 13, 1954.

⁷ *Ibid.*

principles of organization. Discrimination because of race, color or religion was prohibited in the organizations. The leaders of the federation promised to fight against all forms of corruption. At the same time, they included anti-communist points in the agreement, labelling the Communist Party a "subversive organization". Moreover, the "communist threat" that allegedly hung over the labor movement was given as one of the main reasons for the merger.

The seat of all authority in the federation would be the national convention, which would meet biennially. Between conventions, the federation would be governed by (1) an executive council composed of a president, secretary-treasurer and twenty-seven vice-presidents, seventeen from the AFL and ten from the CIO, and (2) a general board, consisting of the members of the executive council and a principal officer of each affiliated union. The president and secretary-treasurer of the merging federation would be initially from the AFL. The CIO was to turn over all of its funds to the AFL treasury, and the AFL and CIO machinery would then gradually merge. These were the terms that had to be approved by AFL and CIO conventions and then by a unity convention. In late February 1955, Reuther stated at a press conference in Washington that only the Transport Workers Union opposed the merger.

The text of a CIO executive board resolution published in February 1955 said: "We deem it important to note that the Merger Agreement recognizes and underwrites the integrity of each affiliated union; that it guarantees and provides equal status for industrial unionism."¹ An Industrial Union Department was set up within the new trade union center.

The AFL organ wrote: "Announcement that the AFL and CIO have agreed on terms for a merger ... was hailed throughout the Nation as a highly constructive step. In labor circles, the reaction was almost universally favorable. A great upsurge in union membership by means of a united drive to organize the unorganized was predicted as the inevitable consequence of labor unity. Another major benefit immediately forecast was a much stronger position for labor in the political and legislative fields." The paper added, however,

¹ *Ibid.*, February 28, 1955.

that "the combined membership of the AFL and the CIO amounts to about 15,000,000 of the country's 62 million workers, or less than 25 per cent."¹ In August 1955, a conference of AFL officials in Chicago approved the terms of the merger agreement. And in October, Meany and Reuther said at a press conference that complete agreement on the merger had been reached. Meany stressed that the feeling among union members was overwhelmingly in favor of the merger.

Thus, it took almost ten years for agreement to be reached on the organizational merger of the AFL and CIO. The leaders of the two trade union centers finally assumed the role of champions of unity and came to an understanding as to how the spheres of influence in the new labor federation would be divided. The situation was favorable for them. In 1949 and 1950, the CIO leaders had engineered the expulsion of a number of left-wing unions, thereby seriously weakening and then completely undermining the progressive activity of the CIO. They altered its course, especially compared to what it was just before and during World War II, when the left wing played a substantial role in the trade unions.

The progressive unions had to wage a debilitating struggle for their very existence. One of those to suffer heavy losses was the Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America. But even so many of these unions held out even against the repression they were subjected to by the police and the courts. Nor did they fall into internal disarray. Time and again they proved their ability to win wage increases and better conditions for the members. From 1945 through 1951, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, for example, conducted 13 major strikes, and another 8 in 1952. The general strike which it organized in the copper industry in 1951 dealt the first serious blow to the wage-freeze system. And in 1952, it gave substantial material assistance to striking steelworkers.

Progressive unionists sparked the formation of trade union committees composed of representatives of their unions and of CIO and AFL locals. In 1951, there were committees of this kind in fifteen major cities.

A vivid example of the drive for unity among progressive

¹ *AFL News-Reporter*, February 18, 1955.

forces in the US labor movement was the formation at a convention in Cincinnati in late 1951 of a National Negro Labor Council. It was supported by trade unions that defended the rights of Negroes and fought racial discrimination. The Council organized its activity on the basis of joint struggle by white and Black workers for equal opportunities for Negroes in employment, wages and working conditions. That this struggle developed successfully was indicated by the rapidly increasing number of local Negro labor councils, whose work was coordinated by the National Council.

However, as a result of prolonged persecution, the condition of the expelled progressive unions continued to worsen. Some faced the necessity of merging with related or stronger unions, so that by the end of the 1950s only four, with a total membership of 300,000, remained in existence. These were the Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America; the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers; the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, Pacific Coast; and the Communications Association of America. But a whole number of unions ceased to exist.

Such were the results of the splitting activities of CIO leaders, who hypocritically assured the rank and file of their desire for unity. Once they embarked on the AFL-CIO merger, they did everything they could to prevent a really democratic unification of American workers from taking place.

What enabled the rightist labor leaders to effect the merger according to their own plans and under their aegis? In the first place, the overwhelming majority of the local union officials and trade union convention delegates were high-paid workers of Anglo-Saxon origin; in the second place, during the postwar years the composition of the working class was considerably renewed, especially through the influx of youth and women, who had not gone through the school of class struggle and were therefore not particularly class conscious; and in the third place, the intensified arms race was causing a rising level of employment, and the labor movement was in a relative lull. The labor leaders controlled the governing bodies of the trade unions and had substantial means at their disposal. They took advantage of these possibilities and seized the initiative.

In the early 1950s, most of the CIO leaders went over

completely to the positions of the AFL leaders on all major issues. The organ of the Department of Labor, *Monthly Labor Review*, said in September 1954: "In fact, the AFL and CIO have begun to resemble each other more closely in recent years—in structure, activity, and ideology."¹ The AFL introduced some structural changes. Besides the craft unions, the AFL now also had some unions built along industrial lines—the teamsters, textile, clothing, atomic, aircraft, construction, electrical and others. These changes were largely the result of the workers' struggle for industrial unions.

Common views on a number of questions relating to the struggle for labor's vital interests, and a certain similarity in organizational structure helped the two trade union centers to draw closer together. A certain role in this was also played by the change in the leadership of both the AFL and CIO, for Green and Murray had for many years been at each other's throats.

But even so, the process of merging dragged on for many years. The leaders of both centers hesitated for a long time before making the decision. In early December 1955, AFL and CIO conventions accepted the terms of the merger and the draft constitution of the new federation.²

The First Constitutional Convention of the AFL and CIO took place on December 5, 1955, in New York. In attendance were 1,487 delegates representing 13.7 million organized workers. The convention proclaimed the creation of the AFL-CIO, composed of 138 national and international unions, 108 from the AFL and 30 from the CIO. The new federation also took in 93 state labor councils, 490 central labor unions and local industrial councils, and 146 federal labor unions and local industrial organizations.

The convention ratified the terms of the merger and the constitution of the federation, and elected the governing bodies. The president and secretary-treasurer, George Meany and William F. Schnitzler, were selected from the AFL. The convention also elected all the vice-presidents that would sit on the executive council. Of the 29 members of the council,

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1954, pp. 970-71.

² *CIO, Proceedings*, 1955, pp. 268-69.

about two-thirds were from the AFL, including, among others, Meany, Dubinsky, Woll, Hutcheson, Harrison, Beck, Schnitzler, Brown and Bates; from the CIO there were Reuther, McDonald, Carey, Rieve, Curran, Quill, Potofsky and others. The 31 CIO unions formed an Industrial Union Department within the federation. It was headed by Walter Reuther, and included Albert Whitehouse as executive director and Carey as treasurer. Each union affiliated with the new federation retained its former status and integrity. Since the federation recognized both the craft and industrial principles of union structure, this meant that duplication remained. The terms of the merger did not provide for the merger of parallel AFL-CIO unions or any organizational restructuring to eliminate the existence of more than one union at any one enterprise.

The AFL-CIO executive council was given broad powers, including the power to expel unions it considered to be "Communist infiltrated". What political line the AFL-CIO leadership would follow could be judged from an article by Meany published in *The New York Times Magazine* on the eve of the merger convention. He offered the monopolies nothing more nor less than a "non-aggression" pact, implying consent to a no-strike policy.

The merger was accomplished from above by conservative leaders and on an undemocratic basis. One of the points in the AFL-CIO constitution was that the new federation would "protect the labor movement from ... the undermining efforts of communist agencies".¹ Thus, the leaders of the new federation sought to make anti-communism—that is, the further persecution and baiting of progressive forces in the US labor movement—a basic policy of the AFL-CIO. This, of course, favorably impressed some of the nation's business and political leaders. In a speech delivered before the convention, in which he welcomed the merger of the AFL and CIO, Governor Averell Harriman of New York said that American trade unions had done more to combat "Communist subversive activities" in the country and abroad than any other organizations in the USA. It was a kind of testimonial to the

¹ *Labor Law Journal*, January 1956, p. 51; *World News*, June 18, 1955, p. 489.

real activity and contributions of the top men in the new federation.

Speaking before a conference of the National Association of Manufacturers on December 9, 1955, Meany, in turn, indicated that there was so much in common between the views held by labor leaders and employers that it was stupid for them to fight each other. Furthermore, to show his opposition to labor's use of the strike weapon, he made this statement: "I never went on strike in my life, never ran a strike in my life, never ordered anyone else to run a strike in my life, never had anything to do with a picket line."¹

Nonetheless, the merger had positive significance in that it contained the seeds of real working-class unity. To a certain extent, the documents of the unity convention reflected this. The AFL-CIO constitution said that the federation would oppose any legislation that did not correspond to the aims of protecting democratic institutions, rights and liberties and the traditions of American democracy. Convention resolutions urged unionists and all working people to struggle in defense of civil rights, especially those of the Negro people, and called for the organization of unions, above all in the South and in the mass-production chemical and paper industries where they were almost non-existent. The convention pointed to the need for more independent political action by unions at election time, and stressed that they would support those candidates who spoke out against the Taft-Hartley Act, the "right-to-work" laws and racial discrimination, and who favored tax reductions.

Certain differences came out at the convention with respect to foreign policy questions. Meany's group of extreme right leaders took a pro-imperialist position, opposing peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems and supporting the cold war policy. A group composed of most of the CIO union leaders, headed by Reuther, also supported the government's foreign policy course, but recognized the need for negotiations on some of the most pressing international problems. The presidents of the clothing, slaughterhouse, textile and packinghouse workers', and hotel and restaurant

¹ *American Socialist*, July-August 1958, pp. 11-12.

employees' unions advocated rejection of the position-of-strength policy and called for efforts to resolve the problems of disarmament. Because of the differences, the convention passed a compromise—but contradictory—resolution: it condemned the 1955 Geneva conference of foreign ministers, but underscored the possibility of new negotiations; it supported the government's official foreign policy course, yet condemned colonialism. At the same time, the convention opposed cooperation with Soviet trade unions. Left unresolved was a fundamental disagreement on the question of what kind of aid, economic or military, should be given to other countries.

The characteristic feature of the AFL-CIO federation was its dual and contradictory nature. On the one hand, it reflected the political backwardness of the labor movement in the USA, and on the other hand, it showed the potential possibilities for stepping up the fight against the monopolies. The Communist Party of the USA greeted the AFL-CIO as the beginning, not the completion, of the process of uniting the trade unions, but at the same time pointed to the danger of its being exploited by the rightist leaders in the interests of the monopolies and the government.

In looking back on the merger of the two trade union centers, one factor that should not be ignored is that differences in approach to many important domestic and international problems existed within the AFL-CIO leadership, and between George Meany and Walter Reuther in particular.

Meany relied mainly on the reformist trade unions in the construction industry. The United Auto Workers which Walter Reuther headed was not only the second largest but also the most active union in the US labor movement. The Negro people, above all Negro workers, hated Meany and his supporters for their racist actions, for supporting a policy of discrimination in the AFL unions and, later, for condemning the Negro civil rights march on Washington in 1963. Walter Reuther not only supported that march, but mobilized thousands of members of his union and other unions in the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department for participation in it.

Meany ignored the interests of the lowest-paid workers.

Reuther, however, got his union to put up \$1,000,000 to finance the Citizens Against Poverty, an organization that united Negroes, workers, clergymen, students, etc.

The AFL-CIO merger did not produce any earth-shaking practical results. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, with all its shortcomings, it had a positive effect on the development of the strike struggle, especially in the first years of the new federation. As we noted earlier, a number of big strikes were conducted in 1955 and 1956 under the sign of unity and solidarity.

The positive effects of a single trade union center were also felt in drawing up new collective bargaining agreements in 1956 and 1957. Under the agreements reached, five million workers in the automobile, steel, construction, transportation, aircraft and aluminum industries won wage increases of five to eleven cents an hour.

However, the contradictions lying at the very foundation of the AFL-CIO continued to sharpen. The policies of cold war and class collaboration pursued by the rightist leaders led to stagnation in the American labor movement. This found expression above all in the fact that Meany and other leaders in every way sought to impede the organization of unorganized unskilled workers.

After the merger, a special organizing committee was set up to head an organizing drive. The executive council allotted several million dollars for this purpose. However, little was done in this respect in the ensuing years. The committee got bogged down in internal disputes over whether the craft or industrial principle should be given preference in the drive.

Moreover, in the second half of the 1950s alone, the AFL-CIO lost 1.5 million members. A session of the AFL-CIO executive council in February 1957 approved new rules providing for the removal of progressive figures from all posts in AFL-CIO unions. The monopolies considered the situation favorable for a new offensive against the working class, and demanded that anti-union legislation be extended to the entire country. Serving the interests of big capital, the government used a Senate subcommittee headed by Senator John McClellan, which was at that time investigating corruption in the

unions in connection with the case of David Beck (former head of the teamsters' union who had misappropriated a sizable sum of union money), for the purpose of discrediting the US labor movement as a whole and causing a split in the AFL-CIO. The monopolies met with partial success. Under their pressure, the AFL-CIO expelled the teamsters, the bakery workers and the laundry workers.

CHARTER XII

THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION
AND ITS SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

The mid-1950s were marked by a deepening of the general crisis of capitalism, which had now entered its third stage. A further change in favor of socialism had taken place in the relationship of world forces. The powerful national liberation movements in Asia and Africa had brought about the disintegration of the colonial system of imperialism. Its internal antagonisms were heightened, particularly in the relations between the monopolies and the masses of working people. The reactionary essence of state-monopoly capitalism had become more pronounced. This was manifested in "the merging of the forces of the monopolies with the power of the state in a single mechanism of struggle against the world of socialism, against the working class and the general democratic movement of the masses".¹ The American monopoly bourgeoisie took upon itself the mission of suppressing the national liberation movement of the colonial and dependent peoples.

During these years the militaristic character of the American economy became more and more evident. As the economy was militarized the role of state investments in it grew, development in different areas of production became increasingly disproportionate, and mass unemployment remained. The monopolies' encroachment on the vital rights of the working people was intensified, and the interference of the bourgeoisie state in labor relations increased.

In these circumstances, the intensity of the class struggle continued to mount as organized workers waged stubborn strike battles to protect their vital interests. During this period, the United States ranked first in the world in the number of strikes. The Negro proletariat became increasingly active in both the economic and civil rights spheres. The general upsurge of national liberation movements throughout the world had a tremendous impact on the struggle of the American Negroes.

At the same time, for capitalist and socialist countries alike, the mid-twentieth century was marked by the beginning of the scientific and technological revolution. Scientific discoveries and technological advances spurred the development of industrial production and had a definite influence on socioeconomic processes. New industries, such as the atomic, electronic, missile, and synthetic materials production, came into being and made rapid progress.

The classics of Marxism-Leninism had recognized the possibility that the means of production would develop rapidly under capitalism. Karl Marx underlined the revolutionary character of the technical basis of industry. He wrote in *Capital*: "Modern industry never looks upon and treats the existing form of a process as final. The technical basis of that industry is therefore revolutionary....By means of machinery, chemical processes and other methods, it is continually causing changes not only in the technical basis of production, but also in the functions of the labourer, and in the social combinations of the labour-process."¹

Lenin regarded competition under capitalism as a factor that stimulated its development. "Capitalism," he wrote, "cannot be at a standstill for a single moment. It must forever be moving forward. Competition, which is keenest in a period of crisis... calls for the invention of an increasing number of new devices to reduce the cost of production."²

At the same time, the founders of Marxism-Leninism also revealed the deep-going contradictions inherent in capitalism which cause the economy and its various branches to develop

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Lenin's Cause Lives On and Triumphs*, Moscow, 1970, p. 66.

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 457.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 152.

unevenly, going through periods of upsurge, crisis, recession and depression. As a result, technological progress, too, was uneven, now accelerated, now retarded.

In the 1950s, the scientific and technological revolution in the United States took place in conditions of recurring economic slumps (the recession of 1953-1954, the crisis of 1957-1958) and low rates of industrial growth.

On the basis of Keynesian theory, American bourgeois economists argued that greater government economic regulation was needed to bring industrial production up. Prof. Philip Wernette of the University of Michigan, in defining the economic role of the state in modern conditions, said that during slumps and recessions the government should spend large sums of money "to organize demand" despite a budget deficit.¹ Otherwise, Wernette warned, crisis could lead to social revolution. Fewest of all to arise were questions concerning the ways in which the government should guarantee a stable market for the monopolies. University of California professor Sherman Maisel wrote: "At one time people feared a lack of suitable channels for public spending...." But soon, an anti-cycle means was found: the arms race. "As long as defense expenditures remain high," Maisel went on, "the budget can be varied enough to counteract a depression...."²

The American economy was being militarized at an ever increasing pace. In the second half of the 1950s, an average of \$42.1 billion a year was spent on defense, as compared with \$36 billion in the first half.³

But even so, the industrial production growth rate remained low. In the five years from 1955 to 1959, the official index of industrial production went up 9 points, that is, an average of about 2 per cent per year.⁴ The growth rate was affected seriously by the crisis of 1957-1958, which was deeper than the preceding postwar crises. Industrial output fell by 14 per cent, durable goods production by 27 per cent, and steel production

¹ See Philip Wernette, *The Future of American Prosperity*, New York, 1955.

² Sherman J. Maisel, *Fluctuations, Growth, and Forecasting: The Principles of Dynamic Business Economics*, New York, London, 1957, p. 439.

³ *Economic Indicators*, December 1960, p. 1.

⁴ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1963, Washington, 1963, p. 774.

by 40 per cent. The upturn that began in 1959 was insignificant and uneven. In October, for example, there was only a 2 per cent growth over 1957.¹ A report of the congressional Joint Economic Committee said that since 1953, each recession was followed by a weaker comeback than before. "Each recovery period has left a higher percentage of the labour force unemployed than before, and a wider gap between the nation's production and its productive capabilities."²

Idle productive capacity stood at 8 per cent in 1955, 22 per cent in 1957, and 25 per cent in 1960.³ Even in periods of upswing the capacity utilization rate never reached 80 per cent. Particularly large reserves of underemployed capacity were found in such leading industries as steel, automobile and aluminum, where it was between 25 and 40 per cent.

Some industries, however, continued to develop rapidly. Thus, the production of electricity in the 1950s grew an average of more than 10 per cent annually, and in 1959 amounted to 794 billion kwh.⁴ New industries connected with militarization of the economy, such as those in the atomic, missile, and electronics fields, advanced even more rapidly. Investments in atomic production in the period 1950-1959 grew from \$2.1 billion to \$7.3 billion, to bring the total invested to about \$50 billion.⁵

American monopolies connected with the arms race reaped huge profits, with those of the biggest (General Electric, General Dynamics, Lockheed, Boeing and others) going as high as 20 per cent of invested capital.⁶

A characteristic feature of technological progress in the United States was that the major achievements in science and technology were applied first of all in the defense industry. In conditions of state-monopoly capitalism, the government assumes the greater part of the expenses for research and

¹ *Economic Indicators*, December 1960, p. 15.

² *World Marxist Review*, No. 9, 1961, p. 80.

³ *Labor's Economic Review*, December 1960, p. 78.

⁴ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1960, Washington, 1960, p. 527.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 543.

⁶ *Economic Notes*, November 1958, p. 6.

development, the fruits of which are then reaped by the big monopolies. Research expenditures from 1950 through 1959 increased more than fourfold, reaching \$12.4 billion.¹ A whole industry of science was thereby created. In 1953, the government provided 53 per cent of the total money spent on scientific research, with the monopolies contributing 44 per cent; in 1958, the government's share rose to 63 per cent, and the monopolies' share dropped to 34 per cent. When it came to the actual utilization of these funds, the picture was different: most of the monopolies engaged in research at the government's expense. Thus, in 1953, government research institutions spent only 19 per cent of these federal funds, and the monopolies—70 per cent. The figures for 1958 were, respectively, 14 and 76 per cent.²

New technology was installed mainly at enterprises belonging to big companies.

Automation accelerated the concentration of capital and production. In the chemical industry, for instance, where automation was introduced especially rapidly, 80 per cent of the enterprises employed not more than 100 workers each, and only 2 per cent employed 500 or more workers. But this did not mean that small entrepreneurs predominated in the chemical industry. On the contrary, the eight largest chemical companies held four-fifths of all the assets in the industry. In the automobile industry, the four biggest companies controlled 56 per cent of the production put on the US market in 1947, and 75 per cent in 1955. In 1957, the four major steel companies controlled 57 per cent of the steel market. The concentration of capital increased even more because of mergers of companies and banks.

In the present chapter we shall deal mainly with the consequences that automation had for the American working class. We shall also examine the impact of the scientific and technological revolution on the workers' strike struggle and the nature of their demands.

Modern science and technology bring about changes in the productivity, methods and forms of labor. The application in

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1960, p. 541.

² *Ibid.*

industry of scientific advances in the fields of electronics, cybernetics and chemistry creates great possibilities for the growth of the productive forces and material wealth.

However, the results of scientific and technological progress and its social consequences depend above all on the kind of socio-political system it takes place in. While under socialism the achievements of science and technology help to create benefits for the whole people, under capitalism the benefits go to the relatively small group of people who own the means of production.

A capitalist enterprise is interested in getting maximum production with minimum outlays for wages, i.e., for the purchase of labor power. The introduction of modern machinery facilitates the creation of such conditions. The cost per unit of production is reduced due to higher productivity of labor, fewer workers employed, and intensified exploitation of those remaining on the job. There are fewer workers employed, but they produce more; the profits of the employers grow, while the workers' share is growing unemployment. Anxiety about the future grows among the workers, the class struggle intensifies, and the movement of protest against the aims pursued by the monopolies and against the conditions under which technological progress is taking place becomes broader. The labor press has noted that the use of new technology in automated production is aimed at having the work pace set entirely by machines.

Automation under capitalist conditions confronted the working class with a number of complex problems connected with skill ratings, structural changes, the shift of labor power from production to the service sphere, intensified exploitation, and job security.

Both Congress and the administration set up committees to study the effect of automation on employment in production. In 1955 and 1960, the congressional Joint Economic Committee heard the views of representatives of science, industry and labor on these questions. From the materials published by the committee it can be seen that the spokesmen for the corporations tried to minimize the negative consequences of automation for the workers and to shift the blame for any adverse consequences onto the unions.

The president of the NAM, for example, said that all the troubles stemmed from the greed of the unions that made inordinate wage demands and thereby forced employers to speed the introduction of automation and get rid of "redundant" workers. This, in his view, was exactly what happened in the coal industry. To make up for the rapid growth of wages, the mineowners put in new machines, as a result of which a large percentage of the miners were left without jobs. If it were not for the union's excessive wage demands, he concluded, automation in the coal industry would have been effected more slowly and with fewer adverse consequences for the workers.

The president of the NAM was expressing the feelings of his associates, the industrial magnates, who said that the corporations would not be in such a hurry to put in new technology if the unions' wage demands were "moderate". Otherwise, the workers would be faced with even more serious unemployment. Consequently, even at this early stage, employers were using automation as a weapon with which to pressure the workers and their unions.

There were divergent views among students of the technological revolution as to its consequences for workers. Some acknowledged that it would inevitably be a constant source of serious difficulties, while others predicted that the difficulties it might cause would be temporary and slight.

On behalf of labor, high officials of the AFL-CIO and some of the biggest unions gave their views on the matter at congressional committee hearings. They felt that not only the corporations but everyone would gain from a proper use of new technology and, above all, a fair distribution of the benefits it brought.

But was this possible under capitalism? As automation developed, some of the top labor leaders began to show apprehension about its consequences. Significant in this respect was the evolution of the views of Walter Reuther, vice-president of the AFL-CIO and president of the United Automobile Workers. In December 1955, he told the Joint Economic Committee that he welcomed advances in science and technology and the fact that companies and employers in industry could acquire more efficient machines. In 1960, however, Reuther's testimony before that same committee

sounded somewhat different. Seeing that automation in the automobile industry had already led to unemployment and job insecurity for many workers, he said that the effect of automation on the economy could now be foreseen more clearly. Day after day, he said, the union ran into the problem of workers being replaced by machines. This was no longer an academic question, but a harsh reality that affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of the union's members. According to the figures Reuther cited, from 1955 to the first quarter of 1960, the number of employees in the automobile industry had been reduced by 6.9 per cent, with a 10 per cent reduction in the number of production workers.

Also of interest was the testimony of James Carey, then president of the Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America, which united workers at such corporations as General Electric and Westinghouse, engaged in the manufacture of modern automation equipment. Appearing before the Joint Economic Committee Carey stated that the introduction of new technology raised innumerable problems for workers. Many worker skills turned out to be obsolete and unneeded. Older workers were knocked out of production and could not find new jobs. Entire worker settlements were being left without jobs because companies were moving their plants to other places.

In the electrical machinery industry the number of production workers was reduced by 10 per cent from 1953 to 1959, although investment in new plant and equipment had doubled. The General Electric corporation invested about \$900 million in new plant and equipment from 1954 to 1959, which resulted only in 43,000 new jobs for researchers and engineers. At the same time, about 50,000 production workers were thrown out of work.

Testifying before the Joint Economic Committee in 1960 Meany, also, stressed that automation had already dealt a blow to large numbers of unskilled, semiskilled and, to some extent, skilled workers, and that even more serious difficulties could be expected in the next 10 to 20 years.

The influence of automation on employment is a complex process. It depends on the rate of production growth and the pace at which new technology is introduced. When the rate of

industrial development is high, displaced workers find jobs in other areas of production. When the rate of development is slow, however, they swell the ranks of the unemployed. Introducing new technology at a slower pace and the use of semiautomatic devices do not have a noticeable effect on employment.

Scientific and technological progress changes the organic composition of capital, with the share of the wage fund in it shrinking. Automation accelerates this process, as becomes especially apparent when data on the growth of investment in new construction are compared with employment figures. From 1950 to 1959, investment grew by 57 per cent, and employment by 16 per cent. In 1950, investments amounted to \$461 for every worker employed in production. If this ratio had remained unchanged, then in 1959 the employment figure would have reached 70.2 million, but in reality it was 51.9 million.¹ The fact that demand for labor power in industry was falling was obvious.

Of interest here are the following Bureau of Labor Statistics figures on the number of persons employed in the nonagricultural sectors of the economy (in thousands)² (see Table 5). The figures in Column 4 reflect the effect of automation on employment when the rate of industrial development was low (2 to 2.5 per cent per year). In mining, manufacturing, construction and transportation, the number of jobs was reduced by one million, while in trade, services, financial and government establishments, the number of employed went up by 2.4 million.

Between 1959 and 1964, when the annual rate of industrial development grew to 3.5 per cent, employment jumped, as indicated in Column 3. Column 5 testifies to a growth in employment between 1955 and 1964 by 7.5 million persons, most of whom were in trade, the services field and offices. In transportation employment fell, and in production industries it changed qualitatively. Some 414,000 workers were laid off at plants and mines, but the number of specialists, engineers and technicians increased. In the meantime, the rapid growth of

¹ Calculated from data in: *Economic Indicators*, December 1960, pp. 9, 11.

² *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1963, p. 223; *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1964, p. 467.

labor productivity more than made up for the loss of production workers. In the ten years covered by these figures, the number of workers employed fell, but industrial production went up 35 per cent.¹ In the coal industry, 400,000 miners lost their jobs from 1950 to 1959, but the remaining 200,000 mined almost the same amount of coal. In the chemical industry, the number of workers fell by 13,000 from 1953 to 1960, yet production increased by 80 per cent. And in electrical machinery, worker employment dropped by 80,000 persons, but production output went up 20 per cent.

Table 5

Industry division	1955	1959	1964	Difference 1955- 1959	Difference 1955- 1964
	1	2	3	4	5
Total	50,675	51,975	58,186	+1,300	+7,511
Mining	792	676	635	-116	-41
Manufacturing	16,882	16,168	17,302	-714	+420
Construction	2,802	2,767	3,106	-35	+304
Transportation and public utilities	4,141	3,902	3,976	-239	-165
Trade	10,536	11,385	12,187	+849	+1,651
Services	6,274	6,525	8,533	+251	+2,259
Finance and insurance	2,335	2,425	2,945	+90	+610
Government	6,914	8,127	9,503	+1,213	+2,589
Production workers (mining and manufacturing)	13,717	13,193	13,303	-524	-414

As noted earlier, there was a general shift of the labor force toward the trade and services fields and government employment. But automation spread to these spheres as well.

A House of Representatives committee set up in 1960 to study the influence of automation on employment found that between 1955 and 1960 computers had abolished 25 per cent of the nation's office jobs. However, this did not yet have an effect on the employment figures, for the services field was

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1968, Washington, 1968, p. 719.

expanding so rapidly that it was able to absorb not only those who had lost their jobs, but also young workers just entering the labor market.

Scientific and technological progress brought about changes in the occupational composition of the working class. Many traditional trades found no application in automated enterprises. At the same time, new trades arose which required special training and a high educational level. The Department of Labor noted in 1956 the appearance of 375 new job categories. Automation generated a rapid growth in staffs of engineers and technicians and noticeably reduced the need for unskilled and semiskilled workers.

Table 6 gives an idea of the character of the structural changes in the working class due to automation. American statistics divide wage earners into two basic groups: blue-collar workers and white-collar workers. The first are industrial production workers, the second, engineers, technicians, managers and office employees (in millions)¹:

Table 6

	1955	1964	Difference %
Blue-collar workers, including:	24.7	25.5	+3.2
skilled workers, foremen	8.2	8.9	+8.5
semiskilled workers	12.8	12.9	+0.7
unskilled workers	3.7	3.6	-2.7
White-collar workers, including:	23.7	31.1	+31.2
engineers, technicians	5.6	8.5	+52.0
administrators, managers and proprietors*	6.0	7.4	+23.3
office employees	8.1	10.7	+32.1
employees in trade	4.0	4.5	+12.5

* The statistics include in the category of wage earners those proprietors who work in the administrative apparatus of their companies.

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1959*, Washington, 1959, p. 218; *A Report on Manpower Requirements, Resources, Utilization and Training*, by the United States Department of Labor, Washington, 1965 (calculations by the author).

The changes in the first group in the table are characterized by a very small increase of production workers, which came about primarily through a certain growth in skilled manpower. The number of semiskilled workers remained virtually unchanged in the 10 years (although it fell by more than one million in the crisis years of 1958-1961). Semiskilled workers comprised the largest section of American working people. Mass conveyor-line production required simple, repetitious movements and thereby tended to produce a category of workers with narrow skill profiles. In automated enterprises they could only perform supplementary operations, and retraining was made difficult because of their inadequate level of education. The proportion of low-skill workers steadily declined (in 1940 they comprised one-fifth of all workers, while in 1964 only one-seventh).¹

The ones affected most by the falling demand for unskilled labor were Negro and poor white workers who could not raise their qualifications because of their social status.

The number of highly skilled workers grew insignificantly. It would seem that automated enterprises should have had a great need for skilled personnel. Yet this category grew slowly. Why? In the first place, some trades became obsolete and could not be used at automated enterprises, and employers' expenditures on training people for the new ones were rather limited. In the second place, and this was the main reason, the expected leap forward in retraining workers for new skills connected with automation had not yet occurred. Some economists felt that the new jobs often demanded even less vocational skill and experience than the old ones. According to Prof. Charles C. Killingsworth of Michigan State University, workers needed only a brief training period to meet the new requirements.² The Department of Labor agreed, saying that "automation has not resulted in upgrading many jobs. Most workers continue to do work requiring about the same skills as before."³

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1959*, p. 218; *A Report on Manpower...*

² *Labor Fact Book 15*, New York, 1961, p. 31.

³ *The American Workers' Fact Book*, Washington, 1960, p. 128.

Employment of white-collar workers increased 31.2 per cent, primarily due to the growing number of engineers and technicians employed. This was the direct result of automation in production and expanded scientific research. The growing demand for office workers was associated largely with an increase in auditing and accounting in industrial and financial corporations.

Some bourgeois economists and sociologists use the structural changes taking place in manpower as an argument in an attempt to refute the Marxist teaching on classes. As sociologist Vance Packard indicated, "some observers have enthusiastically seen this growth of white-collar workers as evidence of a great upthrust of 'working' class people into the 'middle' class".¹ As a result of this alleged transformation the theory of class struggle is supposedly inapplicable to America.

The theory of an all-embracing "middle class" of almost all Americans is devoid of any scientific sense, and serious American scholars do not subscribe to it. Its obvious propaganda purpose is to smooth over and obfuscate the sharp social contrasts in American society.

The growth of white-collar employment does not by any means indicate that American working people are climbing up the social ladder in either the material or vocational sense. According to Department of Labor data, the salaries of office employees and sales clerks in 1957 were 30 to 50 per cent lower than the earnings of workers in the steel, coal, automobile and other leading industries. Therefore, when a worker moved from the production sphere to an office job there was no improvement in his standard of living; on the contrary, the change often entailed material losses.

Within the broad and complex white-collar category there is a deepening differentiation between the high-paid administrative personnel in corporations and banks, a certain part of the specialists in science, technology and culture, and people in the professions, on the one hand, and the mass of office workers and technicians, on the other.

The boundary between these groups runs mainly along the

¹ Vance Packard, *The Status Seekers. An Exploration of Class Behavior in America*, New York, London, 1960, p. 25.

line of their class affiliation, which is determined by social-economic conditions. Whereas the uppermost sections of the white collars are drawn toward the capitalist class, the technicians and office workers tend to stand closer to the working class in terms of their place and role in production, retaining, however, many differences in ideology, politics, traditions, etc.

The scientific and technological revolution has increased the tendency toward a levelling of the economic status of different groups of wage earners. Automation tends to wipe out the distinction between skilled and unskilled work, dissolving both in the general flow of work done by machines.

Technological progress and changes in the character of employment set a number of new tasks before the trade unions. Production workers comprised the basic mass of the nation's union members, but their proportion in the nation's total labor force was falling, while white-collar workers, whose numbers were growing, were only marginally organized into unions. In 1958, unionization was highest in the manufacturing industry. There, two-thirds of all the production workers and only 16 per cent of the office workers belonged to unions. In trade, the services field, communications and transportation, only 12 per cent of the workers were unionized, and among the engineers and technicians, the figure was only 10 per cent.¹

Automation, therefore, dictated the need to organize a large section of the working people. Vice-president of the United Automobile Workers Leonard Woodcock stated at a convention in 1958 that if the engineers, technicians and office employees were not organized, the unions would soon lose their effective power.

Little was being done to organize women into unions, although employment among them in the 1950s was growing twice as fast as among men. From 1950 through 1959, the number of men in nonagricultural production increased by 2.3 million, compared with an increase of 4.5 million women. In 1959, there were 20.9 million working women, comprising

¹ *The American Workers' Fact Book*, 1960, pp. 124, 128.

35 per cent of all those employed outside of agriculture.¹ Yet only 15 per cent of the working women belonged to unions while among men the percentage was twice as high.²

Some labor figures foresaw considerable difficulties in organizing the young people who were annually augmenting the ranks of wage earners. They felt that young workers lacked due respect for the trade unions, since they had not known the crisis and depression of the 1930s, nor the hardships of unemployment, severe working conditions, the tyranny of plant and shop administrations, and had not participated in the class struggle of those stormy years. As a result they knew little of what the older generation had gone through and could not properly evaluate the achievements of the unions, taking them for granted, not something fought for and won.

The merger of the AFL and CIO opened up new opportunities for solving many urgent problems of the labor movement. However, these opportunities were not fully realized due to the conciliatory policy of the union leadership. The AFL-CIO convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in December 1957, was typical in many respects. The profile of the new organization became clearer, as did the contradictions between the more active industrial unions of the CIO and the more inert craft unions still existing in the AFL. The policy that Meany and his associates adhered to seemed too reactionary to the AFL-CIO leaders who came from the industrial unions.

Addressing the convention, Meany touched on the trade union movement only in passing. He dwelt more on the state of the nation's military preparedness than on the urgent tasks of the labor movement. Speaking in ominous tones about the growing might of the Soviet Union, its successes in space, and "communist expansion", Meany called on workers to make sacrifices for the sake of the arms race.

But the delegates were worried about other problems. The loud assurances given by the AFL-CIO leadership at the merger convention in 1955 that a broad campaign would be

launched to organize the unorganized turned out to be an empty promise. The *Fortune* magazine wrote in June 1956: "In the past ten years new organizing has tapered off almost completely." The mass of workers in the chemical, oil, paper and other industries, the magazine noted further, were still unorganized. Only 180,000 of the 1.3 million workers in the oil industry belonged to AFL-CIO unions; just as many belonged to small management-controlled company unions. There were no unions at all at the Du Pont chemical enterprises. Conditions were difficult for the trade unions in the textile industry as well, where there was an intensive relocation of mills from northern to southern states. The mill owners did everything possible to rid themselves of the unions, and in the new locations stubbornly fought every effort to organize the workers.¹

The AFL-CIO executive council's report at the 1957 convention noted that "the organizing climate has worsened since the merger in December 1955".² Anti-union forces headed by the NAM and the US Chamber of Commerce used the AFL-CIO merger as a pretext to step up their campaigns of opposition to trade union concepts. But the root of the evil was not so much the activity of anti-union forces as the passiveness of the federation's leadership.

As for organizing white-collar workers, the trade union leaders had no doubt that there were good possibilities for organizing office and other employees. Engineers and technicians, however, were another matter. Serious difficulties arose in organizing them into unions. Many trade union figures shared the opinion of Joseph Beirne, an AFL-CIO vice-president and president of the large Communications Association of America, who felt that it was hard to talk to engineers and technicians because they considered themselves in many ways above the mass of organized workers: with their good education, they tended to be haughty and turned up their noses at those who fought for the destinies of the less fortunate

¹ *Fortune*, June 1956, pp. 136-37, 174, 176, 179-86.

² *Proceedings of the Second Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO*, Vol. II, Report and Supplemental Reports of the Executive Council, Washington, 1957, p. 99.

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1959, p. 206.

² *The American Workers' Fact Book*, 1960, p. 124.

and more poorly dressed. Today, he said, they were not suitable prospects for the trade union movement.

This negative conclusion was addressed to the past rather than the present, much less to the future. As scientific and technical personnel in industry move further and further away from administrative functions, they also lose many of their privileges and are subjected to increasing exploitation.

The AFL-CIO leadership headed by Meany displayed exceptional energy and haste in expelling a number of large unions from the federation. The drive was conducted under the slogan, "Let's clean our house of corruption and other abuses". The fate of the labor movement depended on this, the convention delegates were told.

What prompted the leadership to instigate a purge? In early 1957, Congress appointed a Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, headed by Senator John McClellan (Dem., Arkansas), to investigate corruption in labor and management. In actual fact reaction was out to discredit the trade unions in the eyes of the public to prepare the ground for a new anti-union law. Nonetheless, the federation's leadership bent over backwards to help the Senator. An executive council report said: "We believe that Congress, in the interest of enacting corrective legislation, if the same be deemed and found necessary, has the right, through proper committees, to investigate corruption wherever it exists, whether in labor, industry or anywhere else."¹

To the dismay of the AFL-CIO leaders, however, Congress was interested only in the unions. The McClellan Committee focussed on the giant teamsters' union, which had almost 1.5 million in its ranks. At first glance this seemed an unusual choice. The union's former president, Dave Beck, a frequent guest at the White House and adviser to President Eisenhower, by all standards of conciliatory politics could be considered a completely loyal labor leader: dishonest, but boundlessly devoted to the interests of his masters. But Dave Beck was beside the point, for he had already been removed from the union presidency for corruption.

¹ *Proceedings of the Second Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO*, Vol. II, pp. 95-96.

The point is that the union was an influential force in the struggle against the employers. This is easy to understand, considering the tremendous role truck transportation plays in the American economy. Many unions achieved rapid successes in their strike struggle when the teamsters came to their aid. The McClellan Committee's tasks consisted in undermining this union on the pretext of fighting corruption. For its part, the AFL-CIO leadership did not meditate long over the fate of the teamsters' union.

On May 20, 1957, the executive council expelled the union from the AFL-CIO, and the federation's convention was asked to approve this decision. Two other unions met the same fate—the Bakery Workers and the Laundry Workers.

With the expulsion of these unions the federation lost 1.7 million members, or more than 10 per cent of its total membership. Besides this, a so-called ethical practices code, as a means of wiping out corruption in the unions, was proposed to the convention. But the code provided, among other things, for a campaign against progressive elements. Membership in or cooperation with the Communist Party were declared violations of ethical standards and grounds for being barred from any official union post.¹ The trade union leaders were still putting an equal sign between corruption and Communist Party membership, although they knew full well what an uncompromising struggle the Communists were waging against this evil in the unions.

Corruption in American trade unions was generated by the conciliatory activity of those union leaders who, behind the backs of workers, made all kinds of illegal deals with employers, looking upon their unions as a private business, and flagrantly misappropriated union funds.

According to official American statistics, by the beginning of the 1960s unemployment in the USA had reached its highest point in the postwar period. The figure for 1959-1961 was 4,183,000 persons, or 5.9 per cent of the economically active population.

The question of expelling the teamsters took up a large part

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

of the time at the AFL-CIO convention in 1957, pushing many important issues into the background. Essentially without debate, the convention passed a non-committal resolution on automation, although a number of unions had proposed concrete actions. The Transport Workers Union of America, for example, submitted a resolution which said that automation on the railroads was no longer a question of the future, with its hopes and fears. For railroad workers automation meant mass layoffs, with a loss of everything that had been gained earlier. The union considered it necessary that the AFL-CIO launch a struggle for a 30-hour workweek as the only answer to automation. The resolution passed by the convention acknowledged that new machines and production methods made it possible to improve living conditions and reduce work hours, but it gave no indication of how this could be realized.

The leadership of the federation obviously had neither a program nor even a clear approach to the problems posed by automation. It was standing by idly, taking a wait-and-see attitude, never binding itself by making concrete recommendations, to say nothing of commitments. This position complicated matters for the unions, leaving them on their own to make the difficult choice of which way to fight in the new circumstances. By that time, several approaches toward the problems of automation had been developed in union practice.

The United Mine Workers, for example, was confronted with the alternative of either fighting to preserve the labor force while agreeing to a reduction in wages, or accepting the companies' conditions, getting, in return, high wage rates and social security for those who remain in the mines. The union leadership, headed by Lewis, chose the second route. Lewis said: "The UMW holds that labor is entitled to a participation in the increased productivity due to mechanization. We decided the question of displacement of workers by mechanization years ago. We decided it is better to have a half million men working in the industry at good wages and high standards of living than it is to have a million working in the industry in poverty and degradation."¹ What happened to those who lost their jobs was no longer the union's concern.

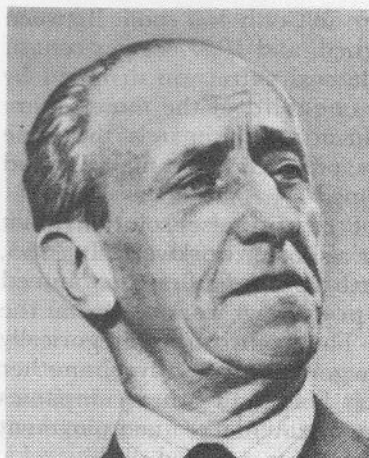
¹ *Political Affairs*, April 1964, p. 24.

The results of this policy were felt only too soon. Between 1950, when the contract was signed, and 1957, 44 per cent of the miners lost their jobs, while coal extraction dropped by only 8 per cent. By 1962, only one-third of the miners were working, while production held at approximately the same level. In a matter of fifteen years, production per man-day had leaped from 6.5 tons to 15.3 tons.¹

Trade union leaders sought compromise solutions that would overlook the demand for a shorter workweek. In 1955, the United Auto Workers set forth a program for a guaranteed annual wage as a means of protecting workers from the consequences of automation. The companies categorically rejected it. In the course of negotiations, however, another plan took shape—one to which Ford and other companies agreed. It was a plan for supplementary unemployment benefits to be paid by the employer for a period of 26 weeks. They were supplementary in the sense that they were in addition to those paid under state unemployment compensation programs. The company was to set up a special fund for this purpose, allocating 5 to 7 cents for every man-hour worked. Although this plan had nothing in common with a guaranteed annual wage, the new benefits did relieve the situation for the unemployed. The UAW had unquestionably scored an important advance. The demand for supplementary unemployment benefits was subsequently incorporated into the negotiating packages of many other unions.

The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, headed as before by Harry Bridges, took a different approach. The problems stemming from the automation of loading and unloading operations in the ports were just as serious as in the coal, automobile and other industries. In 1957, the question of what attitude to take to the introduction of new technology—to accept or reject it—was widely discussed in the union's locals. It was unanimously decided that the time had come for the union to obtain a fair share of the benefits of technological progress for its membership.

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1959, pp. 725, 727; *Political Affairs*, April 1964, p. 27.



Harry Bridges, President of the West Coast International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union

With an eye to this, the union began what turned out to be two years of negotiations with the shipowners. The main thing the union was after was to keep the work force intact (reduction could come about only by natural causes such as death, retirement, disability). A one-year contract was concluded on these terms in 1959. The union regarded it as experimental, putting the principle upon which it was based to a practical test. A \$1.5-million fund established by the shipowners guaranteed the union dockers an average wage when there was no work.

The contract proved to be effective and became the basis for a five-and-a-half-year contract, signed at the end of 1960, under which the shipowners were to put \$5 million into the fund for each year of its duration. The fund was divided into two parts: one provided unemployed dock workers with an average wage, and the other provided for payments of \$220 a month for three years to workers who, having at least 25 years in the industry, chose to retire at 62 instead of 65 years of age.¹

The ILWU achieved more under conditions of automation than any other union. But, in Bridges' opinion, the contract was only a temporary solution, since automation posed such problems as demanded the efforts of the entire working class.

Somewhere or other in America one is always bound to see people carrying signs and posters saying: "On Strike!" They walk silently back and forth outside the gates of vacated factories or form a solid line blocking the way to strikebreakers. Workers relieving one another stand in picket lines round the clock, in any weather, in any season.

¹ *The ILWU Story*, San Francisco, 1963, p. 57; Thomas Kennedy, *Automation Funds and Displaced Workers*, Boston, 1962, p. 83.

Among those who manned picket lines in the second half of the 1950s were steelworkers, auto workers, miners, garment workers, dock workers and seamen. In November and December 1958, three of the five major airlines (Trans World, Eastern, and American) were idle due to a strike of pilots and mechanics. More than a third of the nation's commercial flights had to be cancelled. The automobile industry saw a strike of engineers and technicians against the Chrysler Corporation. For two weeks in December 1958, the residents of New York were without newspapers due to a strike by newspaper delivery men. Strikes took place in the cement, rubber, glass and construction industries. There were strikes at defense plants, and workers picketed the missile bases at Cape Canaveral.

The following figures give a picture of the strike movement in the United States from 1955 to 1959¹:

	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
Work stoppages	4,320	3,825	3,673	3,694	3,708
Workers involved (in thousands)	2,650	1,900	1,390	2,060	1,880
Man-days idle (in millions)	28.2	33.1	16.5	23.9	69.0

Compared with the first half of the 1950s, there was a drop in the number of work stoppages and workers involved. Such ups and downs in the strike movement are connected with the specific economic and political conditions in the country at any given time.

In the years indicated above, the rate of industrial growth had dropped to almost half of what it was in the early 1950s, and unemployment had risen sharply. The crisis of 1957-1958 proved to be the most serious in the postwar period. As the above figures show, the low point in the number of work stoppages came in 1957, with a slight increase in the following two years.

While strikes took place in many industries, the struggle was

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1959*, p. 239; *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957. Continuation to 1962 and Revisions*, Washington, 1965.

particularly sharp in the steel, auto, ore-mining, and transportation industries.

The collective bargaining agreement in the steel industry was due to expire in June 1956. High on the list of worker demands was the establishment of a company-financed fund for the payment of supplementary unemployment benefits for a maximum of 52 weeks. Other demands were for higher wages and larger pensions, and a two-year contract. The corporations rejected these proposals, insisting on a five-year contract on previous terms. All of the union's attempts to continue negotiations were rejected. The companies refused to make any concessions.

On July 1, a total of 650,000 steelworkers throughout the country walked off the job. They did not have to set up picket lines to prevent strikebreaking, because the companies decided to stop production and shut down the mills. However, pickets were posted in keeping with tradition. There were no incidents. The men would peacefully play baseball, and the plant guards cheerfully tossed back the ball whenever it was hit over the fence. But these idyllic scenes outside the mills were accompanied by sharp clashes in the propaganda field, as every means of pressure was brought to bear on the strikers through the radio, television and newspapers.

Three weeks later, the companies resumed negotiations, and on July 27 signed a three-year contract which provided for an annual wage increase of 7 cents an hour, a total of 21 cents, and a fund for supplementary unemployment benefits. The SUB fund was to be financed by employer contributions amounting to 5 cents per worker per hour worked. The duration of the benefits was 52 weeks. An unemployed worker would receive \$25 a week in addition to his state unemployment compensation benefits, which together comprised 65 per cent of his wage. When the state benefits expired, the company benefits would go to \$53 a week for a worker with three dependents. If the amount of money remaining in the fund fell to 50 per cent of the amount put in at the time it was established, then benefits would be cut in half, and would cease altogether when only 10 per cent remained.

The steelworkers did better than the UAW, where supplementary benefits were paid for only 26 weeks.

The struggle of the automobile workers took place during the crisis of 1958. The union's convention in April 1957 had passed a resolution for the reduction of the workweek without a cut in wages, the number one demand in negotiations. But at the January 1958 convention, Walter Reuther dismissed this proposal as unrealistic. What was advanced instead was a minimum program for all companies, and a maximum program for the most flourishing.

The minimum program called for raising wages, extending supplementary unemployment benefits to 52 weeks, and severance pay to workers who lost their jobs due to plant relocation.

The maximum program provided for the division of corporate superprofits into three shares: one to the stockholders, another to the workers, and the third to the consumers (in the form of lower prices). Reuther proposed this obviously utopian plan instead of the demand to reduce the workweek, which brought forth objections at the convention.

With this attempt to encroach upon the profits of the monopolies, Reuther evoked the ire of not only the automobile kings, but also some political figures. Senator Goldwater, whom Reuther had described to the convention as political fanatic No. 1 and a bitter foe of labor, made a hasty trip to Detroit and in a public speech violently denounced Reuther's "socialistic" program, saying that its division-of-profits demand posed a mortal danger to America.

Negotiations over a new contract came to a deadlock. The automobile companies would not hear of any division of profits and in general refused to propose anything to the union except extension of the old contract for another two years. With a stock of some 1,000,000 unsold cars on their hands, the companies had no fear of a strike. In the meantime, the old contract expired. On May 29, General Motors announced non-extension of the contract; Ford and Chrysler did the same on June 1. The workers remained with no contract, their situation vulnerable.

According to the established tradition of "No Contract, No Work", a strike was inevitable. But the union leadership decided otherwise: in a letter to the membership, Reuther said that in view of the recession the union would not follow the

"No Contract, No Work" policy. A strike, in his view, would be unwise; the workers would only fall into the employers' trap. He said that the workers should stay on the job, even without a contract, until satisfactory results were achieved in negotiations.

The companies took advantage of the conciliatory position of the union leadership. A number of enterprises began to reduce wage rates and increase work loads. Their book-keeping departments everywhere stopped withholding union dues from the pay of union members, as they had done previously under the contract. In taking this action, the employers were pursuing far-reaching aims. The union newspaper explained: "The Ford Motor Co. is under the false impression that terminating the check-off of Union dues will weaken our Union. The Company is hopeful that only a few of our members will pay their Union dues voluntarily and thereby give the Company an argument in contract negotiations that the members of the Union are not in support of their leaders."¹ But the company's tactic failed, for the workers stood in line for hours, if need be, to pay their union dues.

The corporations tried other ways, too, to undermine the union. General Motors and Ford, for example, sent letters out to all their employees in an effort to convince them that everything they had owed not to the union but to the company, which showed "fatherly" concern for their welfare without any union interference. They were hoping that with unemployment being a serious problem they could persuade the workers to support an extension of the old contract. But these attempts failed, too.

The union locals did not abide by the central leadership's no-strike decision. On June 4, 1958, a strike broke out at one of the General Motors plants in Pittsburgh. Then another broke out at a Chrysler defense plant. This forced Reuther on June 23 to take a poll of the locals. Ninety-two per cent of them came out in favor of striking. The workers did not want to work without a contract.

A strike against the Ford Motor Company was called on September 17, and 95,000 workers walked off their jobs. Six

¹ *Ford Facts*, June 7, 1958.

hours later the vice-president of the company had already signed an agreement with the union. The workers received a wage raise amounting to 2.5 per cent per year; supplementary unemployment benefits were extended from 26 to 39 weeks; and a lump sum severance pay (with a \$1,200 maximum) was established for workers laid off due to plant relocation.

General Motors refused to sign a contract on these terms. A strike of 300,000 workers was called on October 2, and on October 3 the contract was signed. One day of decisive strike action accomplished what five months of fruitless negotiations and work without a contract could not.

In 1959, public attention was drawn to strikes of ore miners and steelworkers. The International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, as we know, was expelled from the CIO in 1950, and had been persecuted ever since. The AFL-CIO leadership vainly sought to lure workers in that industry into other unions. Now the union's contract with the copper and zinc monopolies—Anaconda, Kennecott, Phelps Dodge, American Brass Company and others—was due to expire on July 30, 1959. In March, the union met for its 54th convention to decide on the terms of the new contract. Its newspaper had made a survey to find out what demands the workers considered paramount. Here are some of the responses it received. James Edwards from Georgia said: "Higher wages, of course, come first. They are needed and justified. Then to take care of unemployment and layoffs we need a shorter workweek without any loss in pay." Armand Navarro (California): "Job security. We've got to show the companies ... that we're ready to fight and beat back attacks against our jobs and contract conditions." Floyd Loewe (Montana): "Due to the decline in markets, speed-up and increased mechanization replacing men—all causing layoffs and unemployment especially in our industry—I think job security should be a major issue in this year's bargaining." John Pawinski (Buffalo, New York): "First of all we should put up a real fight for the shorter workweek without loss in pay to get more of our laid-off members back in the job."¹

Taking the views of the membership into account, the

¹ *The Mine-Mill Union*, April 1959, pp. 4, 5.

convention adopted a bargaining program which provided for wage increases; supplementary unemployment benefits amounting to 80 per cent of the wage for 52 weeks; retention by workers of all privileges, seniority and others, upon relocation of enterprises; reduction of the workweek to 32 hours; the right of workers to refuse overtime work; and a contract of not more than two years' duration, with the right to review the terms after one year.

The companies turned thumbs down on the union's demands and declined to make any counterproposals. John Clark, the union president, said: "Our efforts to confine the 1959 bargaining struggle to the negotiating table have been treated with something akin to scorn. It is apparent to me that some of the companies actually are trying to provoke a strike."¹ At the same time, the companies waged an active propaganda campaign against the union, hoping to split its ranks. The attempt failed. On August 10, 35,000 workers in the mines and mills went on strike. The employers immediately stepped up their anti-union activity. Using strikebreakers, they tried to instigate a back-to-work movement on the old contract terms. In the meantime, fourteen of the union's leaders were being persecuted by the Department of Justice: they were charged with conspiracy to conceal that they were Communists.

Despite the repression, baiting and provocations, the union acted energetically and decisively. Its leaders went out among the striking workers. John Clark went from place to place, stood in the picket lines with the workers, and shared all the hardships connected with the struggle.

The wives of the workers also took an active part in the fight as they organized field kitchens, rest places, barber shops and clothing and shoe repair services for the pickets. The president of the union local at the Magna Copper enterprises had this to say: "The women were terrific. They did a magnificent job bringing new spirit to our members in this fight for the life of our union at Magna Copper. There is no way for us to fully show them our thanks and appreciation."²

¹ *The Mine-Mill Union*, August 1959, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*, January 1960, p. 3.

It was a long strike, and the union's funds were dwindling. On November 10, the union asked the AFL-CIO for help. Meany turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the striking workers. But help did come from the ILWU, the United Electrical Workers, and some AFL-CIO locals. In particular, the strikers were supported by the hotel and restaurant workers in Cincinnati, the auto workers in Cleveland and Chicago, steelworkers in Buffalo, the slaughterhouse workers in Chicago, and dozens of other union locals.¹

The union paper reported on the "hundreds of defense and strike contributions that have been pouring into the International Mine-Mill office in Denver during the last few weeks from ordinary people in almost every state in the nation. They are from people we never heard of—doctors, lawyers, pensioners, workers, teachers, etc.... Dollars, two dollars, five dollars, ten dollars ... in coins, bills, money orders and checks; plain in an envelope, many with scrawled messages hard to decipher, almost every one with regret that 'I can't afford more'...."²

The trial of the union leaders began in October and went on simultaneously with the strike. After lengthy court sessions, the union leaders would again man the picket lines and speak at meetings, keeping up the spirit of the workers.

This unequal struggle, full of deprivations for the strikers went on for six months. Solidarity and unity gave the union the strength needed to see the fight through to a successful end. The companies finally made concessions, and on February 11, 1960, the strike ended with the signing of a two-year contract. It provided for a 22.5-cent-an-hour wage increase, \$2,000 worth of life insurance at company expense, and a benefit of \$2,500 in event of the work-related death or disablement of a breadwinner. All these were important points for the men working under the hard and dangerous conditions in the mines and mills, where the companies grudged the money for safety measures. The union failed to get supplementary unemployment benefits, and the companies also categorically refused to reduce the workweek without a cut in pay.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*

During all this time, the trial of the union's leaders was still in progress. It finally ended in March. Five of the defendants, including the union's secretary-treasurer, Irving Dichter, were sentenced to three years in prison, with a fine of \$2,000 each; the others received shorter terms. It was all part of the effort by the corporations, in alliance with the government and the AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy, to undermine this progressive union and leave it leaderless.

The strike in the steel industry was the first mass strike of that period in which the problems of automation were uppermost. The question being decided was: what real possibilities did the unions have to influence the course of technological progress and bring about effective job-security measures? As for the corporations, they wanted an absolutely free hand in applying new technology, regardless of its consequences for the workers.

The union was in a difficult situation at the time, with its funds steadily drained by the payment of benefits to unemployed members. The union paper was later to write: "Nineteen fifty-eight had been a year, not of recession, but of depression for Steelworkers."¹ Steel mills were operating at only half capacity, creating a huge army of unemployed in the industry.

Nonetheless, the union showed every sign of growing vigor. This was true especially after an opposition had emerged against the conciliatory policy of the union's president, David McDonald. It first became evident in February 1957, at the time of elections of officers, when the candidacy of Donald Rarick, a blast furnace operator, was advanced against McDonald for president. Despite attempts to suppress the opposition, its slogan calling for the return of the union to the workers found wide support among the rank and file, and Rarick received more than 30 per cent of the votes. This jolted the leadership out of its complacency and spurred it to more vigorous action.

The negotiations over a new contract that began in May soon became deadlocked. Executive Vice-President of United States Steel Conrad Cooper demanded on behalf of the steel corporations that the union agree to cardinal changes in the

¹ *Steel Labor*, November 1959, p. 4.

contract clauses pertaining to work rules as a prior condition for further negotiation on the union's demands. This became the main issue because under the contract concluded back in 1947, the union was given the right to take part in controlling certain working conditions, and the monopolies felt that this impeded their initiative for technological progress. The union, in turn, proposed that this issue be referred to a joint committee of the union and the industry for further study during the term of the new contract.

Cooper maintained that the difficulty with the union's proposal was that it sought "to treat now with subjects uppermost in the union's mind ... but to defer to a later date the solution of the companies' problems, which they regard as an essential stepping-stone to a non-inflationary agreement".¹

In a hopeless search for reconciliation with the companies, the union leaders held off calling a strike. They asked the President of the United States to appoint a mediation commission, but the White House turned a deaf ear to their request. A strike of 540,000 steelworkers became inevitable, and on July 15, 1959 it began. A pamphlet published by the union gave the full story of the causes and course of the strike.² One after another the blast furnaces went out and the blooming and rolling mills ground to a halt. The workers set up picket lines, but this time they were not playing baseball as in 1956; it was an entirely different strike. The union paper wrote: "U.S. Steel has now determined to deny its workers even a small share in the giant earnings they helped to create."³

The workers realized that the struggle was not so much for higher wages as for their jobs. Steelworker Jason Kieffer (Minnesota) wrote that what the steel companies wanted to do under the guise of improved "local working conditions" was to provide grounds for further cuts in the work force. "This means the older man is unemployed, can't work long enough to get a pension," he said.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, July 1959, p. 10.

² *The 1959 Steel Strike. United Steelworkers of America*, Pittsburgh, 1961.

³ *Steel Labor*, August 1959, p. 7. The corporations' profits in the first half of 1959 were the largest in all their history. Every worker brought \$4,345 in profits that year, as against \$1,300 in 1957 (see *Steel Labor*, August 1959, p. 7).

⁴ *Ibid.*, September 1959, p. 6.

Every striker personally felt the acuteness and tension of the struggle. The companies' plan was to exhaust the union. They assumed that the workers could not survive a long strike, that privations would force them to return to work. But they did not take into account the determination of the workers. Steelworker Raymond Vince wrote: "We are determined to meet the challenge of the steel industry at all cost."¹

The steel magnates also underestimated labor solidarity. The steelworkers received over \$5,000,000 from other unions. Big demonstrations in support of the striking steelworkers were organized in New York and Detroit on September 7. The executive council of the AFL-CIO called on all unions to give all possible aid to the strikers, and passed a resolution which emphasized the militant spirit of the workers. It said: "In full recognition that the steel strike is part of the big business conspiracy, we hereby declare our determination to make the steel strike the struggle of the whole American labor movement and to mobilize our full resources, our collective will and the human solidarity of American workers to win this historic struggle for human justice."²

The executive council asked President Eisenhower to persuade the companies to resume negotiations. Similar calls were also made in Congress. The Democrats did not miss this opportunity to criticize the Republicans for their inaction and to stress the danger of the anti-labor policies of the monopolies. In the House of Representatives, Democratic Congressman Elmer Holland said: "We are witnessing in America today the greatest barrage of anti-union propaganda.... Employers are viciously fighting against legitimate collective bargaining ... resisting organization of their employees.... This massive attack on labor is not new. It actually has been going on for years, but only during the past two years has it reached the unprecedented intensity of today."³ At the same time, an active anti-labor campaign was developing in Congress, and a new law against the unions was in the making.

Eisenhower decided to intervene in the dispute. On

¹ *Steel Labor*, September 1959, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*

September 30, he invited US Steel president Roger Blough and union president McDonald to the White House. The company agreed to resume negotiations, but this was followed by a new development. On October 21, in accordance with the Taft-Hartley Act, a federal court ordered a halt to the strike for 80 days, and on November 7, the Supreme Court upheld the decision. One hundred and sixteen days of tense struggle and deprivations for the workers ended in court repression. Just as the stocks of steel were giving out and the strikers were close to victory, they were forced to return to work.

The indignation of the workers compelled the union leaders, too, to utter what were for them unpleasant words like "big business conspiracy", "class war", etc. McDonald wrote: "Steelworkers will return to work if they are required to do so by law. But the union will not be beaten. The basic issues will remain."¹

In January 1960, the 80-day injunction expired and the steelworkers could again go out on strike. A poll showed that they were ready to do so. The leading corporations figured that if the strike were renewed, Congress would inevitably intervene, and new repressive actions would be taken against the union. Their hopes, however, were not justified. The head of the Kaiser Steel Corporation, Edgar Kaiser, notified the other steel companies that he was beginning negotiations with the union to avoid losing a profitable 200-million-dollar order.

The proposal to negotiate with the union was put to a vote. Nine companies, including Republic Steel and Armco Steel, supported Kaiser. United States Steel and Bethlehem Steel were left in the minority. In November, Kaiser signed a contract with the union, effective to July 30, 1961, which served as a way out of the impasse for all the other companies.

The workers received a wage raise of 9 cents an hour in 1960, and as much in 1961. A sliding scale adjustment of wages was retained (if prices rose, workers could receive up to three-cent-an-hour increase in wages per year). And supplementary unemployment benefits were retained to October 31, 1961. The issue of working conditions was referred to a special committee. The contract noted: "The parties shall establish a

¹ *Ibid.*, October 1959, p. 12.

joint committee to study problems resulting from automation and technological change and local working conditions...."¹

This period also saw the dock workers waging a strike struggle under extremely difficult conditions. Every time they undertook a strike action, it was blocked by court injunction. On October 16, 1955, for example, a dock workers' strike paralyzed all Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico ports. The West Coast longshoremen staged a one-day work stoppage as a sign of solidarity. The government invoked the Taft-Hartley Act, and on the ninth day the strike was terminated. But 80 days later, on February 12, 1956, the East Coast strike was resumed. The shipowners were forced to make concessions. They agreed to increase wages and set up a welfare fund; however, the union's important demand for job security measures remained unsatisfied.

When the contract expired on October 1, 1959, the East Coast dock workers again struck. History repeated itself. On the eighth day, a Taft-Hartley injunction forced them to terminate the strike. Thus, using the anti-labor law, the government made a fiction of the workers' right to defend their vital interests by means of a strike.

The strike movement in the second half of the 1950s was distinguished by the fact that it was affected by the consequences of the scientific and technological revolution. This manifested itself above all in the sharp struggle by industrial workers and other groups of wage earners for job security and against the increasing displacement of "redundant" workers.

While employers considered wage demands to be a matter for customary bargaining with the unions, they felt that the job-security demands went beyond this framework. They regarded them as intolerable interference by the unions in the management of production, tantamount to an encroachment on private property.

The employers were unwilling to make concessions on questions of employment. The workers won some improvements in economic conditions, but neither the steelworkers as a result of tense struggle, nor the longshoremen, whose strikes

¹ *Steel Labor*, December 1959, p. 4.

the government repeatedly suppressed by repressive actions, nor any other unions were able to win employment guarantees.

All this resulted in tougher and longer strikes.

Wages continued to rise in the second half of the 1950s, but at a slower rate than in the first half. Thus, average weekly earnings in the manufacturing industries showed an increase of 29.7 per cent from 1950 to 1955, but went up only 15.3 per cent between 1955 and 1959.¹ This difference was even more noticeable in terms of real wages, which increased 11.3 per cent in the first half of the decade, but only 4.5 per cent in the second. The absolute figures given here represent the growth of weekly wages in the manufacturing industry for a worker with three dependents in the 1950s (in dollars)²:

1950	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
67.26	74.80	76.29	75.85	74.71	78.23

The growth of real wages was slowed down during the 1957-1958 crisis, when, on the one hand, nominal wages fell somewhat, and on the other, the cost of living went up. This affected the purchasing power of the population. As a result, per capita spending for 1956-1958 went down 3.2 per cent, but rose 3.6 per cent in 1959. But these are average figures, which means that some workers' real wages were higher than this average, while others' were lower. We noted earlier the existence of income differentials between various categories and groups of workers.

Data on the distribution of incomes of American families for the period 1955-1959 give an idea of the condition of the working people. The Department of Labor budget for an urban family of four amounted in 1959 to \$6,024 a year, or \$116 a week. But only workers in the high-paid category could count on a budget like this. A large part of the American working people had considerably less money to spend. The unions figured that great privations awaited a family with an income of less than \$3,000 a year.³ Millions of families still existed on such incomes.

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1962, p. 230.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Policies for Economic Growth*, Washington, 1959, p. 6.

In 1959, 17 million families, or 29 per cent of the total number of families in the country, had incomes of less than \$3,000 a year. In 1955, the figure had been 36 per cent. Who were these people? The bulk of them were unskilled workers and people employed in the services field who, in 1958, were making an average of \$2,300 a year. About 60 per cent of the Negro families made less than \$3,000 in 1958.¹

At the bottom of the social ladder were wage earners with incomes of less than \$1,000 a year. In 1959, there were 4.1 million such families, or 7 per cent of the total. They could count on an income of less than \$20 a week, which, in conditions of the USA, doomed them to poverty. Over 20 per cent of the Negroes employed in industry and agriculture and 41 per cent of all working women were in this bracket.

The number of families with incomes below \$1,000 a year declined by 4 per cent over the five year period (1955-1959), which indicated a certain improvement in the condition of the low-paid worker category. However, in that same period, the number of families with incomes between \$1,000 and \$2,000 did not change. They numbered 7 million in 1959, comprising 12 per cent of all families.²

The incomes of families of skilled workers in 1958 were around \$5,800 a year, close to the Department of Labor's figure for a "modest but adequate" budget for the average family. Semiskilled workers had average earnings of \$4,800 a year. This, then, in general, was how the average incomes of different categories of workers compared with the income needed for a family of four to live at a "modest but adequate" standard.

At the same time, the gap continued to widen between the incomes of millions of working people, on the one hand, and of the small group representing the monopoly bourgeoisie, which surrounded itself with a high-paid apparatus of company presidents, managers, lawyers, etc. This group was in the top category of families with incomes of \$50,000 a year and higher. From 1950 through 1959, the percentage of such families

¹ *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1959*, p. 318; *The American Workers' Fact Book, 1960*, pp. 101, 116.

² *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1959*, p. 318.

remained roughly the same, increasing only from 0.2 to 0.3 per cent of all families. But their incomes, in aggregate, had doubled—from \$7.6 billion to \$15.2 billion.¹

In 1959, virtually all categories of blue- and white-collar workers were in income brackets of up to \$6,000 a year. In that year, 57 per cent of all American families were in this group. Their share of the national income was 28.8 per cent, while in 1955, they had received 40 per cent.² This drop stemmed from a certain reduction in the number of families with incomes of up to \$6,000, on the one hand, and the rapid growth of incomes of well-to-do families, on the other. The rich became richer, taking an ever larger share of the national income.

From March 1956, the official minimum wage established by federal law was increased to one dollar an hour. This somewhat improved the condition of some low-paid categories of working people. However, millions of workers in trade, services, and agriculture were again, as in 1938, not covered by this minimum.

Many workers experienced privations due to unemployment. Unemployment benefits did not provide a subsistence minimum, since, in 1959, they averaged only \$33.70 a week, or a little over one-third of the average wage of industrial workers. In the southern states these benefits went as low as \$20 a week.

On the whole, however, as a result of vigorous strike action, and notwithstanding the intensified offensive against the labor movement on the part of reaction, a considerable part of the American workers saw an improvement in their economic condition in the second half of the 1950s.

¹ *Survey of Current Business*, April 1962, p. 11.

² *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1959*, p. 317 (percentages calculated by the author).

CHAPTER XIII

REACTIONARY ENCROACHMENTS
ON CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

The American ruling class spread the idea of class collaboration, the idea that reconciliation and harmony between labor and capital was imperative. At the same time it used the powers of the legislative and executive branches of government to wage an offensive against the economic and political rights of the working class. This manifested itself most forcefully in labor legislation and the persecution of the Communist Party of the USA.

Many American legislators felt that the existing anti-labor and anti-Communist laws (the Taft-Hartley, McCarran-Wood, and McCarran-Walter acts) had not achieved the goals set. They insisted on a stiffer policy with respect to organized workers and stronger repressive measures against the unions and the Communist Party.

The Taft-Hartley Act had already done great damage to the labor movement as employers made wide use of it to thwart the strike struggle. Besides this, it significantly limited the unions' opportunities to recruit new members. Labor called insistently for its repeal. In every election campaign, the Democrats and Republicans promised to have the law amended to moderate some of its provisions. Eisenhower, too, had made such promises when he was running for president. However, after he was elected and his Secretary of Labor, former president of the AFL plumbers' and pipefitters' union Martin Durkin, drew up nineteen amendments to the Taft-Hartley Act, Eisenhower declined to submit them for congressional consideration. Thus, the President reneged on his promise to support the

movement to amend the Taft-Hartley Act. As mentioned earlier, in accordance with a decision of the executive council of the AFL, Martin Durkin resigned in protest.

A number of Democratic pro-labor congressmen—George Rhodes (Pennsylvania), Thomas Lane (Massachusetts), Carl Perkins (Kentucky), Roy Wier (Minnesota)—introduced bills to repeal the Taft-Hartley Act. But these bills, too, never reached the floor for congressional debate. Rhodes said in this regard that the interests of the corporations, which were waging a war against every labor organization, had dominated the country's economy and were the decisive force in the government.

Lobbyists representing the monopolies were pressuring the Republican administration and Congress to adopt even harsher measures against labor. In this sense, they were no longer satisfied with the Taft-Hartley law because it had not enabled the monopolies to smash the unions or stop the strike movement. Appearing before a congressional committee, NAM representative Armstrong urged that the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act be strengthened, that "compulsory unionism" be prohibited (he had in mind the closed or union shop), and that industry-wide strikes be outlawed.

Many congressmen voiced similar views. They also demanded that no restrictions be placed on the right of states to pass their own labor laws. In this regard, *The Wall Street Journal* wrote: "In almost every case these state laws have been tougher on unions than the Federal statute." Business groups, the paper said "want the states free to enforce tighter curbs on union activity".¹

Another series of congressional bills was aimed at breaking what was called labor union monopoly. Bourgeois sociologists had filled many pages in an effort to demonstrate the "growing danger" of this development in the United States. Donald Richberg, for example, in his book *Labor Union Monopoly* went as far as to maintain that predominant power was no longer in the hands of the capitalist magnates. "The greatest concentrations of political and economic power," he wrote, "are found in the under-regulated, under-criticized,

¹ *The Wall Street Journal*, April 3, 1953.

under-investigated, tax-exempt, and specially privileged labor organizations."¹

So-called Communist "penetration" into the unions was another problem that worried Congress. Congressmen racked their brains over how to keep Communists out of the unions. A special subcommittee was even set up to study the problem. Headed by Senator Hubert Humphrey, it included, among others, Senators Taft, Ives and Douglas. However, as its members later admitted, the subcommittee could find no answer to the problem. It recommended merely that the Senate seek a more vigorous application of the anti-Communist clauses of the Taft-Hartley Act.

But the anti-Communist sections of the Taft-Hartley Act no longer satisfied reactionaries in the top union leadership. One of them, AFL president Meany, speaking before a congressional committee, said that the struggle against communism would take years and required a close alliance and cooperation between business and labor.

The powers-that-be did not venture a new and stronger blow against the labor movement before they softened up public opinion for it. The reactionaries began looking for facts that could discredit the unions and play on the imagination and feelings of ordinary Americans. It was not hard to find them. There were many people with questionable reputations who had wormed their way into the unions—leaders with criminal records who misappropriated union funds for private gain. That there was scandalous corruption in the trade union bureaucracy was no secret. And it was this that the reactionaries decided to exploit in order to deal a smashing blow to the unions. In late 1956, the Senate embarked on an extensive investigation of corruption in the labor unions and, ostensibly, in management. As noted earlier, the Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field was set up for this purpose, headed by Senator McClellan (Dem., Arkansas), and including such ultra-reactionaries as Republican Senators Joseph McCarthy (Wisconsin), Karl Mundt (South Dakota), and Barry Goldwater (Arizona). From the Democrats, there

¹ Donald R. Richberg, *Labor Union Monopoly. A Clear and Present Danger*, Chicago, 1957, p. VI.

was Senator John Kennedy (Massachusetts), who took a moderate position.

The McClellan Committee launched into vigorous activity. Its investigation was given much publicity as day after day the newspapers, radio and television fed the "scandalous" findings to the American public.

The committee was investigating only five unions of the 200 large national and international labor organizations. Among them were the teamsters' union, the bakery and confectionary workers' union, and the textile workers' union. At the same time, of the 125,000 companies having collective bargaining contracts with unions, only 50 were investigated, and quite superficially at that. But even so, the senators found much evidence of criminal actions by owners of companies and their agents in fighting the unions. All this was covered rather scantily in the McClellan Committee's report.

The committee acknowledged the need for legislative measures to prevent the spread of corruption in the trade unions. Reaction took advantage of the conclusions drawn by the committee. Driving a wedge between the mass of workingmen and the unions, and the unions and society, and hypocritically demanding the protection of the rights of rank-and-file union members, it was preparing a blow against the labor movement as a whole, and above all against the right of the working class to organize. The target was the union shop.

As a result of the Taft-Hartley ban on the closed shop and intensified court persecution and suppression of progressive elements, the growth of the unions declined sharply since 1947. However, the unions were not forbidden to establish the union shop rule, which required employees to become members of the union thirty days after being hired.

While the Taft-Hartley law recognized the union shop, Section 14 (b) of the law permitted the states, at their discretion, to pass laws depriving the unions of this vital right. Prior to 1947, there were only three states which had such laws—Florida, Arizona and Nebraska. In 1955, there were already seventeen. The state anti-labor laws were demagogically called "right-to-work laws", but they gave workers neither rights nor work. They contained not even a hint of any

guarantee of employment. Undermining the unions, they left the workers at the mercy of the employers. In states where such laws were in effect, the unions were weak and wage rates considerably lower and working conditions worse than in the industrial northern states.

A new campaign in the state legislatures and the US Congress to ban the union shop began in 1957. The US Chamber of Commerce and the NAM demanded that the legislators take decisive measures against the unions. One of the NAM leaders, Cola G. Parker, argued: "The cornerstone on which union monopoly power rests is compulsion—compulsion on the employer to sign a union-shop agreement; and compulsion on the working man to join the union if he wants to make a living.... With one hand they [the unions—*Ed.*] keep a tight grip on the working man's throat, so that he can neither move nor cry out in protest; with the other they reach into his pay envelope and into his welfare fund in order to enrich themselves."¹

The unions faced a fierce battle to defend their right to organize the working class. The AFL-CIO leadership realized the significance of this danger. A resolution of the AFL-CIO convention in 1957 noted that the right-to-work laws pursued only one aim—to weaken and destroy the unions. Organized workers and all who believed in their right to organize unions, it said, would vigorously oppose these laws. In practice, however, the labor leaders behaved very timidly.

Conditions for the fight against anti-labor legislation were more favorable for the workers in the northern industrial states than in the South. In nine states out of sixteen, bills banning the union shop were defeated because of strong union pressure. In five states, including California, the legislatures neither adopted nor rejected such laws; the question was put to a popular vote, or referendum, during the congressional elections of 1958.

In the states where referendums were held, the issue was a hot one. Organized workers, indignant over the anti-union drive, campaigned energetically, and local unions distributed

¹ *Congressional Digest*, Washington, October 1957, p. 244.

pamphlets, posters, and leaflets in the millions urging voters to reject the proposed anti-labor legislation.

The enemies of the unions staked their hopes on the referendum in California, a state with highly developed industry and a large working class. *The Wall Street Journal* wrote: "This campaign is really a national campaign. If California goes right-to-work, there'll be very few states which won't have it in the next two to four years."¹

But California did not "go right-to-work". The voting public defeated the proposition. The same thing happened in Ohio, Washington and other states, the only exception being Kansas, which became the nineteenth state with such a law.

Reaction continued its offensive. Congress was preparing a new blow to the labor movement under the guise of combatting corruption in the unions. The Eisenhower administration became actively involved. In his message to Congress on January 23, 1958, the President recommended that it pass legislation "to provide greater protections for the rights of individual workers, the public, management and unions in labor-management relations".² In his view, this had become necessary because of the corruption, coercion and other unlawful acts of the unions revealed by the McClellan Committee.

In his message to Congress of January 28, 1959, Eisenhower outlined a 20-point program. "Complete and effective labor-management legislation ... is essential to assure the American public that true, responsible collective bargaining can be carried on with full protection to the rights and freedoms of workers and with adequate guarantees of the public interest."³ This time, his recommendations to Congress were more categorical. The first 9 points had to do with rules of accountability, election procedures in the unions, and measures for holding violators of established procedure criminally responsible. Further, they called for a ban on the secondary boycott⁴ and picketing with the intent of forcing an employer

¹ *The Wall Street Journal*, October 16, 1958, pp. 1, 23.

² *Congressional Digest*, November 1958, p. 262.

³ *CR*, January 28, 1959, p. 1297.

⁴ During a strike workers often declare a boycott of retail trade and other enterprises that have a direct relation to the struck enterprise and help it in the struggle against the unions.

to recognize a union as the representative of his employees in negotiating a collective bargaining agreement, or forcing employees to recognize the union as their representative in cases when the employer had recognized another labor organization.¹ Employers in turn could ignore a labor organization at their enterprises and conclude contracts with company unions on the terms they wanted. The administration also recommended as broad as possible use of state legislation and the courts against labor organizations.

Most of the Democrats in the 86th Congress assessed Eisenhower's program as a Republican maneuver to pass a stiff anti-labor law with Democratic votes, and thereby undermine the Democratic Party's positions in the presidential election of 1960. As for the Southern Democrats (the Dixiecrats) and the Republicans, they welcomed the program.

On June 27, 1959, Philip Landrum (Dem., Georgia) and Robert Griffin (Rep., Michigan) introduced into the House of Representatives a bill that not only reproduced Eisenhower's program, but strengthened some of its provisions. The Landrum-Griffin bill became the basic subject of debate in Congress. Griffin attempted to define the direction and substance of US labor policy. The Congressman declared: "The first, and the most important, principle which underlies that policy is that the workers in any establishment should be free to select, or not to select, by majority rule, the union or bargaining agent of their choice.... The second fundamental principle is that the public and innocent third parties are entitled to some consideration and protection...."²

The legislators were seeking to isolate the unions, portraying them as a dangerous development in a "free society". In this sense, the extremists even felt that the Landrum-Griffin bill was only a "timid step". Representative Bruce Alger (Rep., Texas) proposed that the anti-trust laws be invoked against the unions.³ Senator Hubert Humphrey (Dem., Minnesota), saying that he would vote for the bill despite its shortcomings,⁴ drew

¹ *CR*, January 28, 1959, p. 1297.

² *Ibid.*, August 11, 1959, p. 15531.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, September 3, 1959, pp. 17916-17.

the attention of Congress to the exceptional role that labor leaders Meany, Carey, Dubinsky and others played in the struggle against the Communists in the USA and other countries.¹ The Senator felt that it was not in the interests of Congress to undermine the prestige and status of such labor leaders, and it was in this that he saw the weakness of the bill.

As was the case with many other laws, this bill was written and pushed through Congress under strong pressure from the monopolies. Some legislators admitted this fact. Democratic congressman Cleveland Bailey, for example, said that some of the basic changes in existing legislation that this bill proposed "offer a direct threat to the very existence of the organized labor movement.... This Landrum substitute ... covers everything from the 'cut of a man's coat to the trimming of a woman's bonnet'. If they overlooked anything, it was because the National Association of Manufacturers, [and] the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ... failed to think of it."²

Many members of Congress, including Democratic Congressmen Holland (Pennsylvania), Roman Pucinski (Illinois) and George Rhodes (Pennsylvania), came out with similar statements.³

The Eisenhower administration followed the debate in Congress closely. On August 7, 1959, the President said in a radio address that for two years he had been urging Congress to pass a law that would protect the American people from union abuses. He voiced his support of the Landrum-Griffin bill. On September 3, the bill was passed by the Senate (by a vote of 95 to 2) and on September 4, by the House of Representatives (352 to 52). On September 14, 1959, the President signed it into law.

Title I—under the high-sounding heading of "Bill of Rights of Members of Labor Organizations"—guaranteed each individual equal voting rights and freedom of speech with respect to the operation of the union's affairs; preserved the right of individual members to sue the union and its officers; and guaranteed against unlawful union penalties. Thus, under

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, August 12, 1959, p. 15678.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 15586-744.

the guise of protecting the rights of union members, the law prohibited organizations from applying sanctions against violators of the union constitution and internal order.

Section 201 of Title II required that every labor organization must file with the Secretary of Labor a copy of the union's constitution and by-laws, and a report giving the name and address of the organization, the names of its officers, the amounts of dues and assessments to be charged, and procedures for fining or otherwise disciplining members, holding meetings and the selection of officers. Unions were required to file annual financial reports showing their assets and liabilities, all receipts of money and their sources, and direct and indirect loans.

Sections 301-303 of Title III required national unions to file a report on all trusteeships established over local unions. They also specified what actions taken by a national union with respect to a trustee organization were to be considered unlawful.

Title IV established the procedures for elections of union officers and their frequency.

Section 504 of Title V prohibited anyone who had been a Communist Party member within the previous five years from serving as an officer in any union. After every provision of the law in the above titles and sections, fines of not more than \$10,000 or prison sentences of not more than one year, or both, were specified for violations.

The law provided that union members had the right to file complaints in court if dissatisfied with election procedures, collection of membership dues, or the character of the leadership. The court was empowered to examine the matter to determine whether there was a violation of the law and to order the removal of union leaders from their posts if found guilty of such violation. The Act thereby legitimized greater court interference in the life and activities of labor organizations. These rights of union members offered employers broad opportunities to engineer the removal from union posts of persons they considered undesirable, and to introduce chaos into union elections.

Other titles and sections of the law banned secondary boycotts, and made it unlawful to force a wage earner to join a

labor organization, this latter provision actually striking a blow to the union shop principle.

Such were the most essential provisions of the new law. Its aims and substance underscored with new force the ever growing government interference in labor relations. Even under the Watson-Parker and Taft-Hartley acts the government could not act with such cynical frankness on the side of the dominant class as was permitted by the Landrum-Griffin Act. The AFL-CIO leadership issued a protest against the new anti-labor law. But that is as far as it went as it settled into a position of adapting to the new conditions.

American reaction once again made the Communist Party the target of its main attacks. In the mid-1950s, the party underwent another serious political crisis, and the Communists found themselves facing new ordeals. This time, the right opportunist elements were led by John Gates, the editor of the *Daily Worker*. His group, like the Browderists in their time, sought to liquidate the party. They cast aspersions on the American Communists' past, portraying their history as an endless chain of left-sectarian errors. The revisionists were advocating "Western socialism", as opposed to "Eastern socialism".¹

Speculating on the condemnation of the cult of the personality and distorting the domestic and foreign policies of the Soviet Union, the revisionists spoke as apologists for American imperialism as they extolled its alleged exceptionalism, classless nature and even peacefulness.

As a demagogic cover for their anti-Communist fabrications, the Gates group called for the creation of a broad anti-monopoly coalition to fight "for socialism". But for this the Communists had to commit political suicide—to cease their existence as a political party and dissolve themselves in an amorphous educational association. The revisionists gained a majority on the National Committee. Using the party press organ, they initiated a debate at a time when repression against the party continued to mount. It was precisely the anti-Communist hysteria that Gates and his supporters thought would be their best ally in liquidating the party.

¹ *Proceedings. 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, USA, February 9-12, 1957, New York, 1957, pp. 81-82.*

The right opportunists proposed that the question of creating an association not be debated in convention, but that the debate be continued outside the convention. They wanted in this way to doom the party to a prolonged factional struggle that would cause a cleavage in its ranks. But this maneuver did not work either. At the 16th convention, held in February 1957, the revisionists suffered a serious setback.¹ The bourgeois press had predicted an inevitable end to the existence of the Marxist-Leninist party in the United States. The convention sessions were open to the public, and newsmen swarmed to witness the "tragic denouement".

William Z. Foster, who played an important role in the convention, in his address gave an analysis of the difficulties the party was experiencing, describing them as an organizational and ideological crisis brought on by the demoralizing influence of imperialism on the working class and the party. Revealing the roots of revisionism, he said: "This right tendency is a direct political descendant of the Lovestone opportunism of the boom 1920s and the Browder revisionism of the boom 1940s. The right trend manifests itself by a softening of the party's theory and fighting policies, and it points in the direction of class collaboration."² Foster called on the delegates to put up a vigorous and irreconcilable fight to save the party and preserve its faithfulness to Marxist-Leninist principles.

Many prominent party figures—Gus Hall, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Henry Winston, Robert Thompson, Carl Winter—were in prison at the time and could not take a direct part in the struggle against the revisionists. But they expressed their full support of William Foster. This support from prestigious party leaders lent strength to the Communists who united around Foster, and gave them added confidence in the cause for which they were fighting.

The 16th convention upheld the party. Its resolution said: "This convention goes on record to affirm the continuation of the Communist Party of the USA. Our chief task is to

¹ *Proceedings. 16th National Convention of the Communist Party, USA, February 9-12, 1957*, New York, 1957, pp. 58, 59.

² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

strengthen, rebuild and consolidate the Communist Party and overcome its isolation. This convention opposes the transformation of the party into a political or educational association."¹

The convention kept the party intact, and this was its chief historical significance. The main resolution, however, was a compromise between three groups in the party—the right, center and true Marxists. The right revisionist influence was strong.² Earlier, at a plenary meeting of the National Committee in April 1956, the Gates group, which was in the majority, got the party to state that the left-sectarian danger was the "main danger" within the party. It held to the same position at the convention, exaggerating the left-sectarian errors of the party and masking the danger of revisionism. Those who favored preserving the party stressed the necessity of fighting both the left and right danger.³

The rightists attacked democratic centralism, the basic principle upon which all Communist parties are built. Undermining this principle fully accorded with their liquidationist aims. The resolution spoke of the need to amend the party constitution and give party members the right to engage in factional struggle after decisions were adopted. The revisionists succeeded in modifying the procedure for elections to the National Committee. Only one-third of its sixty members would henceforth be elected by the convention, while the other forty would be elected by local party organizations. The National Committee would thus be robbed of its significance as the central governing body and placed in direct dependence upon separate local organizations. This would inevitably lead to federalism in the party and undermine its discipline, integrity and monolithic character.

The 16th convention dealt a serious blow to revisionism, but the struggle with revisionism in the ranks of the party was not over. The revisionists, still holding high posts in the central bodies, continued their subversive activity. The Gates group had a majority on the Executive Committee, and retained control of the *Daily Worker*. As the struggle went on, the rightists slid further and further into the camp of open

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

² *Political Affairs*, December 1959, p. 49.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

enemies of the working class and its party. In October 1957, Gates' supporter Alexander Bittelman came out with a series of articles as a most zealous exponent of bourgeois ideology.

In December 1957, under pressure from Gates, a majority on the Executive Committee voted to reject the Declaration of the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. This hostile action with respect to the international communist movement drew sharp criticism within the party. Under the



Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Vice-President of the Communist Party USA (1959-1961) and Chairman of the Communist Party USA (1961-1964)

influence of this criticism, at the next meeting of the Executive Committee Gates was removed from the post of Secretary of the National Committee, and in January 1958, the decision was taken to cease publication of the *Daily Worker*, of which he was then editor. Having lost his support, Gates resigned from the party. With his departure the positions of the rightists were weakened. A plenary meeting of the National Committee in February 1958 dissolved the Executive Committee and elected a new one. The plenary meeting approved the Declaration of the Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties.

By the time of the 17th convention in December 1959 the Communist Party was considerably stronger and more united. Of no little importance was the fact that Gus Hall, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and others, who had been released from prison in the interim, took part in the convention.

The 17th convention discussed the tasks of the party with respect to its internal political situation. It also devoted much

attention to United States domestic and foreign policy, since the ruling circles of the USA were continuing the cold war and the arms race. The convention pointed to intensified reaction within the country. Monopoly capital, a convention resolution said, "is developing a most far-reaching, concentrated drive against labor, whose aim is to deprive the unions of all economic and political power, and to place them under complete government domination and control".¹

The convention described the intensification of the class struggle manifested in the strike battles in industry and transport as a most important development. At the same time, it was stressed that "organized labor cannot content itself with mere defense against the growing torrent of blows rained upon it. On the contrary, if it is to defeat these and move forward it must launch a counter-offensive."² It was further noted that some of the top labor leaders, above all Meany, "laid the labor movement open to the Landrum-Griffin-Kennedy Law by collaborating with the McClellan Committee", and that the "moderate labor reform" bill which they, in fact, initiated through Senator Kennedy "opened the floodgates of reaction in Congress".³

The problem of peace was described as the main issue in the political life of America. In this connection, the support of the cold war and arms race on the part of the trade union bureaucracy was seen as doing great damage to the trade union movement and going against the interests of the popular masses as a whole.

Still the chief task before the party was to overcome its isolation from decisive sections of the labor movement, to strengthen the party's mass base among the industrial workers, Negro and white, and among youth.⁴ The Negro and youth questions occupied a special place at the convention.

As Gus Hall noted in his speech, dogmatism and a doctrinaire approach had prevented the party from entering the mainstream. These were the shortcomings of the party that

¹ *Political Affairs*, January 1960, p. 12.

² *Ibid.*, February 1960, p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

the right opportunists had exploited. They held that the party could enter into the mainstream only by liquidating its left progressive base. In other words, in the view of the rightists this goal could be achieved at the price of disarming the party ideologically and forfeiting its political independence. The party rejected this fatal course.

The convention resolution noted that the party must apply every effort to revive the activity of the left forces and help establish their unity with all progressive elements.

The convention elected the leadership of the party. Gus Hall was elected general secretary; Eugene Dennis, chairman; and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, vice-chairman. The 17th convention strengthened the party as it faced new tasks in the labor movement. Its decisions helped intensify the struggle against the revisionists.

By the beginning of the 1960s, substantial changes had taken place in the ethnic composition of the population of the United States in general, and in the working class in particular. The 1960 census figures give an idea of the character of these changes. First of all, the percentage of foreign-born Americans had fallen. According to the 1960 census, there were 9,738,143 foreign-born in the country, comprising 5.4 per cent of the population,¹ as compared with 8.8 per cent in 1940, and 13.2 per cent in 1920. Besides this, there were 24,312,000 US residents, or 13.6 per cent of the population, who had at least one foreign-born parent.² Thus, the number of persons of foreign origin in the USA still remained very impressive, although their share in the population and, correspondingly, in the composition of the working class, was diminishing. The figures cited testify to a further increase in the national homogeneity of the population. The basic factors promoting this were the rather substantial natural population growth in the 1950s, the relatively small immigration, and processes of assimilation.

Nonetheless, the ethnic consolidation of the American

¹ 1960 Census of Population. *Advance Reports. General Population Characteristics*, Washington, 1961.

² *Ibid.*

nation as a whole, as well as the blending of ethnic elements in the working class, were still far from being completed. The 1960 census gives a good picture of the ethnic diversity in the population and what proportions of the population the most numerous of the national groups comprised. The figures include all US residents who were foreign-born or had at least one foreign-born parent (second generation). This category numbered 34,050,000 persons. The countries of origin and sizes of the largest of the groups in this category, according to the 1960 census, were as follows: Italy—4,543,000; Germany—4,320,000; Canada—3,181,000; Poland—2,780,000; Russia—2,290,000; Mexico—1,735,000; Ireland—1,773,000; Austria—1,098,000; Sweden—1,046,000; Czechoslovakia—917,000.¹

While these figures on the whole correctly reflect the numerical size of the national groups, substantial corrections must be made in some of them. By the mid-1950s, there were in the country about six million Italians, five million Jews, fifteen million Slavs (Poles, the largest group among them, numbered four to five million), and three million Mexicans. These, then, were the largest national groups represented in the population of the United States. And they were also, with certain exceptions, the largest national groups in the working class.

In the 1940s and 1950s, immigration was uneven. It was insignificant during the war, but then followed a noticeable increase in the immigration flow from war-torn Europe. On the whole, immigration between 1941 and 1961 amounted to 3,821,862 persons.²

Characteristic of US immigration policy since the early 1920s was its "national origins quota" system by which the government sought to stabilize the ethnic and racial composition of the national stock. The postwar years saw the same racist and chauvinistic principles operating, which almost completely excluded, for example, the admittance of immigrants from Afro-Asian countries. In general, however, the dynamics of immigration were most closely associated with the specific features of the postwar cycle, with such important

¹ 1960 Census of Population. *Supplementary Reports*, Washington, 1962.

² See 1960 Census of Population. *Advance Reports*....

indicators as capital investment and unemployment rate. Most impressive in the 1950s was the growth in the number of Latin Americans, above all Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. The absence of quota restrictions, geographical proximity and, most important, the low standard of living of the working people in Latin America—caused to a considerable extent by US policy in the Western Hemisphere—brought about a massive influx of immigrants from these countries. Thus, during the war and postwar years the number of Mexicans in the USA grew by 600,000. But not all of them were reflected in official statistics, for a considerable proportion immigrated illegally. As a result of intensive immigration, 700,000 Puerto Ricans concentrated in the northeastern regions of the country, and especially in New York.¹

In the postwar years new immigrants generally showed the same tendency as was observed previously to settle in the northeastern regions of the country or to gravitate toward the western states because of their intensive industrialization. As before, they tried to avoid the South. In this connection, the distribution pattern for Latin Americans is of interest. It is true that Mexican agricultural workers among whom there were many illegal immigrants or so-called "wetbacks"² settled mainly in the southern states. However, contrary to a widely held opinion, the South was by no means the only place with large concentrations of Mexicans. Many went to work in the ore-mining and railway transport industries of the southwestern and western states, and as many settled in the industrial centers of the East.

Substantial changes took place in the social and occupational composition of the postwar immigrants and second-generation Americans. Whereas earlier, especially in the first decades of the twentieth century, immigrants were predominantly peasants, farm workers and manual laborers, only a very small proportion of the immigrants of the 1940s and 1950s were in these categories. On the whole, the trend in the postwar years

¹ Oscar Handlin, *The Newcomers. Negroes and Puerto Ricans in a Changing Metropolis*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1959, p. 51.

² Mexican agricultural and unskilled workers who swim across the rivers bordering the USA to go to the States in search of work.

was more toward skilled workers, engineers and technicians.

In characterizing the present occupational and social composition of Americans of foreign origin one must naturally bear in mind that most of them have been in the country for several decades, many having been born and raised in the United States, and have been able in this time to acquire skills. The simplification of production operations in industry made it easier for old and new immigrants and their children to enter industries and types of work which were formerly inaccessible to them.

These changes in the occupational skills of old and new immigrants have served for some American writers who propound fashionable theories of "social mobility" as the basis for asserting that immigrants are in full measure socially mobile, that virtually every step of the social ladder and level of well-being are now accessible to them. One of the facts used for this argument is the existence of foreign-born in the white-collar category discussed earlier. As noted in the book, *The Worker Views His Union*, many children of immigrants have now "entered white-collar occupations". And further: "To many of the younger generation, white-collar employment, even though one remained permanently an employee, represented an escape from the conditions of factory life."¹

To be sure, a certain levelling has, on the whole, taken place with respect to the status of "native" and "alien" workers as a result of the immigrants' long residence in the country, their becoming naturalized citizens, their upgrading their skills and, finally, and no less important, because of their persistent struggle for their rights. However, even now sometimes noticeable differences remain in the living standards of workers belonging to various ethnic groups, and in the forms of their exploitation. Discrimination in the field of labor because of race or nationality exists both formally and in fact. First, there is still no all-embracing federal law that would ban discrimination in employment and conditions of work; second, discrimination is actually provided for in the statutes of a number of states; and third, even the few anti-discrimination

¹ Joel Seidman, Jack London, Bernard Karsh, Daisy L. Tagliacozzo, *The Worker Views His Union*, Chicago, 1958, p. 4.

laws that do exist are frequently violated in employment practice. Moreover, discrimination extends not only to "coloreds" but also to Italians, Slavs and Hungarians. A study made by the Senate Subcommittee on Employment and Manpower showed that of the 282,248 occupations it surveyed more than half were inaccessible to "coloreds".

Racist and chauvinistic principles current in labor relations affect the status of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and people from the West Indies and Asia, who often experience a no less heavy burden of discrimination than Negroes. The differences in living standards, conditions of work and wages among the various categories of workers are perfectly obvious. The report of the Senate Subcommittee on Employment and Manpower contained an authoritative confirmation of this. Among workers belonging to the ethnic minorities, the report noted, the unemployment rate is always higher than the average for the country.

In 1960, when the unemployment rate stood at 5 per cent in the country as a whole, it was 9 to 10 per cent among Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. Among Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Negroes, only 3 to 4 per cent were highly skilled workers, while the figure for "native" white Americans was 12 per cent.

Official Department of Labor data confirm the fact that the annual incomes of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans are also considerably lower than the average. The absence of vocational training, education and work experience, the accumulated results of generations of poverty, the lack of access to the privileged strata of society, the impact of prejudice and fanaticism—this combination of unfavorable factors puts up economic and social barriers which prove to be insurmountable for workers belonging to the ethnic minorities.

Industrial workers of Latin American origin are subjected to discrimination at every turn of the way, to say nothing of the extreme poverty of the migrant farm workers, among whom Mexicans are predominant. Writer Michael Harrington, who made a thorough study of the life of these workers, has this to say of their lot: "They are no longer participants in an ethnic culture from the old country; they are less and less religious; they do not belong to unions or clubs. They are not seen, and because of that they themselves cannot see. Their horizon has

become more and more restricted; they see one another, and that means they see little reason to hope."¹

The conditions typical of the dwellings of the old immigrants—congestion and lack of sanitation—in many respects still obtain in the ethnic districts and ghettos of many cities. This is particularly typical of New York. In recent decades certain changes have taken place in the immigrant settlement pattern in the cities, so that in some cases urban districts and ghettos have lost their narrow ethnic color. "This new type of slum groups together failures, rootless people, those born in the wrong time, those at the wrong industry, and the minorities. It is 'integrated' in many cases, but in a way that mocks the idea of equality: the poorest and most miserable are isolated together without consideration of race, creed, or color."² The mixed, multinational character of the population of the new slums does not, however, alter the fact that Americans of foreign origin are still their basic core. But, as Harrington correctly notes, poverty "is no longer associated with immigrant groups".³

As before, the interests of the monopoly elite predetermine the existence of substantial differences in working conditions and living standards between "native" and "non-native" workers. This introduces competition, discord and mutual animosity in their ranks. However, some important changes are discernible in this picture, the economic underpinning of which is the fact that the monopolies are waging an offensive against the living standards of working people as a whole, and not just those of the minorities.

At the same time, the ruling circles pursue a national policy that conflicts with the interests of the broad section of Americans that make up the minority groups. In this connection, the immigration laws and the McCarran-Walter Act discussed above evoked particular discontent. The leadership of the AFL-CIO could not avoid reckoning with the growing mass discontent over the immigration laws, so it came

¹ Michael Harrington, *The Other America. Poverty in the United States*, New York, 1964, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 144-45.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

out with a demand that the McCarran-Walter Act be re-examined. Representatives of the AFL-CIO told the Judicial Subcommittee of the House of Representatives of their negative attitude to the principles of ethnic and racial discrimination reflected in this law. It was characteristic that in speaking on this question Carey was most of all concerned about the fact that the law gave the Communists ammunition for criticising the United States. He admitted, in a very indirect way, that for many years labor (meaning the labor leaders) had supported chauvinistic immigration statutes.

The explanation for this shift in the position of the trade union leadership lay not only in the extreme unpopularity of the racist practices in immigration policy, which it could not ignore, but also in the fact that immigration in the 1950s and 1960s was not extensive, so that the labor leaders could make this gesture of speaking out for a change in immigration policy without running any particular risk.

The immigration flow declined noticeably due to the present pattern of development of the capitalist economic system. Despite the passage in 1965 of a new law which abolished the system of quotas based on race, national origin or nationality, it is already too late for this law to have any significant influence on the proportions in the national composition of the working class or to alter the tangible trend toward its increasing national homogeneity.

Discrimination in the field of labor against immigrants, especially those not having the rights of citizenship, is an undeniable fact. Struggle against it is becoming a major problem for the working class and the unions. Unless they conduct an all-round and constant campaign of protest against discrimination they cannot wage an effective struggle for improving the life of this large section of the working class, for further growth in the number of trade unions, against unemployment, and for working-class unity.

The importance of the Black question in the United States can hardly be overestimated. It is naturally impossible in a general work on the history of the labor movement in the USA to cover such a vast and complex problem as the history of the struggle of the American Blacks for their vital rights and civil

liberties. The present work examines only some of the more essential aspects of the present stage of the struggle of the Blacks in the context of the labor movement.

In the 1950s, the Black struggle against discrimination became very active and acute, assuming the most diverse forms. This struggle was indissolubly connected with the general upsurge of the national liberation movement of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the liquidation of colonialism. Also of uppermost importance were the changes which had occurred in the class structure of the Black population of the USA. The overwhelming majority of the Blacks had broken away from the land, migrated to the big urban and industrial centers, and poured into the ranks of the American working class.

The movement of Blacks from the rural regions to the cities, especially of the North and West of the country, significantly reduced the concentration of the Blacks in the South where during the 1940s its proportion in the total population dwindled from 22.9 to 20.8 per cent. This process continued in the subsequent years. The Blacks comprised 10.6 per cent of the country's total population in 1960, or some 20 million. In 1950, the proportion of Blacks living in the South was 70 per cent; but by 1960 it was only 58 per cent. Furthermore, two-thirds of the entire Black population were now living in urban communities. New York, for example, had more than one million Blacks, and Chicago, almost a million.¹ Almost 90 per cent of the Black workers were employed in industry, trade and the services. The rest worked on farms, mainly as farm laborers.

Between 1940 and 1959, the movement of large numbers of Blacks to the industrial centers resulted in a fall from 20 to 9.3 per cent in the proportion of agricultural workers, and from 21.1 to 5.4 per cent in the proportion of farmers, in the overall number of employed Black men. At the same time, the proportion of unskilled workers in the nation's labor force grew considerably due to the influx of Black workers.

The industries where Blacks were employed were the ones

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, December 1962, p. 1359; *U.S. News & World Report*, November 1961, p. 67.

with the hardest working conditions. At the end of the 1950s, Negroes comprised 11 per cent of all industrial workers, and made up 25 per cent of the miners, 30 per cent of the packinghouse workers, 15 per cent of the steel and auto workers, and 45 per cent of the lumber workers.¹ Black workers had the hardest work, the lowest pay, and a high unemployment rate. During the severe industrial slump in the spring of 1958 Blacks constituted 20 per cent of all jobless in the country. In the postwar period, opportunities for Blacks to get well-paid jobs were sharply reduced. Even in the manufacturing industries the percentage of Black workers employed fell considerably, while in low-pay, hard jobs generally, the percentage of Blacks increased. Of all employed Blacks, 65 to 70 per cent were performing simple unskilled labor.² According to official statistics, the average earnings of Black men in 1960 amounted to only 52.5 per cent of the average earnings of white workers, while women made even less. In the southern states, the Black received one-third as much as the white worker.³

Such were only some of the facts of discrimination against Blacks.

As we can see, much had changed over the years in this large section of the American people: it now had a different class structure, the proportion of workers in it had increased, and the economic and political role of Negroes in the history of the United States had grown. Changes had taken place in the sentiments of the Black population as its awareness and striving for equal rights mounted.

The mass proletarianization of Blacks, the difficult conditions under which they lived, and the fact that their political rights were constantly being trampled upon—all this activated the Black people.

The attitude to the Black movement on the part of various social groups and parties also was changing. Taking into account the changes that had taken place, the Communist Party of the USA, which had always devoted much attention to

¹ *World Marxist Review*, No. 7, July 1959, p. 20.

² Ray Marshall, *The Negro and Organized Labor*, New York, London, Sydney, 1965, p. 169.

³ *Monthly Labor Review*, December 1962, p. 1365.

the Black movement, re-examined some of its views on the question. The party program adopted back in 1930 had called for struggle for self-determination of the Black people as a separate nation. In 1959, the 17th convention of the party withdrew the slogan of Black self-determination and autonomy as erroneous. The history of the USA and the specific features of the formation of its people showed conclusively that the American Blacks did not constitute a separate nation. While the Blacks were, in the conditions of capitalist America, the most oppressed section of the population, they were nonetheless an organic part of the American people. Seeking to escape from jimcrowism in the South, many Negroes went to other states. However, there, too, they encountered discrimination, unemployment and deplorable housing conditions. No matter where they went—to New York or Chicago, San Francisco or Los Angeles, or the capital of the USA, Washington, D.C.—poverty and privations accompanied them everywhere.

When trying to rent a home in a white residential area the Black ran into discrimination: landlords turned him down. When looking for work in a factory or office, he was further convinced of his lack of equal rights as employers took the white worker first. When counting the money in his pay envelope, he saw that he got much less than the white worker did for the same work.

From time to time, the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government and the bourgeois political parties undertake certain measures to broaden civil rights. By themselves, however, these moves prove to be clearly inadequate for solving the Black question, not only because they are always half-measures but also because they are not strictly enforced.

An example of the ineffectiveness and limited nature of steps taken by the authorities in the Black question was the Supreme Court decision of May 1954, outlawing segregation in public schools. Formally, it did not have the force of law, even though it was based on the Constitution. In 1957, Congress passed a civil rights law which was of little practical benefit to the Blacks. In response, however, the southern racists, the Dixiecrats, and their allies in the Republican Party staged a revolt against the Supreme Court decision. Nineteen senators

and 77 members of the House of Representatives—most of them Democrats from the southern states—joined in declaring that they regarded the Supreme Court decision on abolishing school segregation as “a clear abuse of judicial power” that encroached upon “the reserved rights of the States and the people”.¹

This racist declaration was essentially a call to the forces of reaction in the States to suppress the Black movement. The state legislatures of 9 southern states adopted resolutions declaring the Supreme Court decision invalid in their states. The racist movement of the so-called White Citizens Councils grew substantially with the open backing of the state governments. The stench from burning Ku Klux Klan crosses, the symbol of the racists' readiness to commit terrorist acts, hung ominously over cities and towns of the South. In Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Georgia and other states, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was subjected to persecution.

The liberation movement did not retreat before the new offensive of reaction. In December 1955, a mass boycott against the big National Citizen Lines, which operated buses in ten southern states, began in Montgomery, Alabama. About 50,000 persons, representing almost the entire Negro population of the city, took part in the boycott, which lasted for seven months and ended only after segregation was abolished on the local buslines of the state. The boycott was led by the Rev. Martin Luther King, who later became a prominent leader of the Black movement.

The events in Montgomery had repercussions throughout the country. Speaking at a convention of the NAACP in June 1956, King said: “You can never understand the bus protest in Montgomery without understanding that there is a new Negro in the South, with a new sense of dignity and destiny.”²

The fight against segregation in the schools was nationwide, but was particularly sharp in the South. The Eisenhower administration remained passive to the continued sabotage of the Supreme Court decision by state officials. Black discontent

¹ *Congressional Digest*, April 1957, p. 105.

² *Political Affairs*, September 1956, p. 11.



Black leader Martin Luther King and Walter Reuther, President of the United Auto Workers and Vice-President of the AFL-CIO.

with the inactivity of the federal authorities grew. This found expression in a mass march of Blacks on Washington in May 1957, in which 30,000 people from more than 30 states of the South, North and West took part, including representatives of unions and youth and church organizations. In Washington, the marchers held meetings to voice the demand for Black civil rights. Noting the big role that Black workers had played in organizing the march, *Political Affairs* magazine said: “Not since the Civil War has there ever been such a powerful, massive demonstration of the Negro people for first class citizenship.”¹ The march was of a profoundly peaceful nature. The participants gathered for mass prayer meetings at the steps of Capitol and the Lincoln Memorial.

After the march the struggle against segregation intensified. Certain of its episodes received publicity both within the

¹ *Ibid.*, July 1957, p. 15.

United States and abroad. This was the case with the events in Little Rock, Arkansas. When on September 1, 1957 nine Black children boldly came to enrol in a white school the racists turned the town into an armed camp reminiscent of scenes from the Civil War of the last century. On September 2, Governor Faubus ordered the national guard to Little Rock to support the racists. The Eisenhower administration, in turn, was forced to send in federal troops to demonstrate the authority of the federal government. But even in these circumstances, the southern states continued to ignore the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in the schools. According to official data of the Civil Rights Commission, in 1960 there was not a single integrated school in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and South Carolina—states where over a million Black school children lived. Of the 278,000 Black school children in Louisiana, only four were in schools with white children. And in Arkansas, only 100 of the state's 104,000 Black school children were in integrated schools.¹

The mass Negro movement was a peaceful movement of "non-violent resistance" under the strong influence of Black clergymen. This form of protest, some Black leaders said, would awaken the consciousness of the white population and win its support and sympathy. As King felt at the time, self-sacrifice lay at the core of non-violent resistance. If necessary, he said, "we must honorably fill up the jail houses of the South. It might even lead to physical death. But if such physical death is the price we must pay to free our children from a life of permanent psychological death, then nothing could be more honorable."²

At a convention of the NAACP in September 1956, the theory of gradualism (advocating a gradual solution of the Black problem through measures from above) was subjected to sharp criticism. Thurgood Marshall, Secretary of the NAACP, declared that gradualism was nothing more than a slowing down process born of fear and fed by terror. A. Philip Randolph, member of the executive council of the AFL-CIO, said: "And let us have no illusions about the doctrine of the

¹ Richard Barnett and Joseph Garai, *Where the States Stand on Civil Rights*, New York, 1962.

² *Political Affairs*, September 1956, p. 12.

middle of the road gradualism or moderation, for they offer no hope or assurance of liberation from segregation. Negroes want their rights and want them now."¹

About 1.5 million Blacks belonged to trade unions, with 1.2 million of this number in AFL-CIO unions. These figures could have been considerably higher were it not for discrimination in the unions.

The AFL-CIO leadership continued to hold to the racist positions of Gompersism. Its 29-member executive council included only two Blacks—A. Philip Randolph and Willard S. Townsend. But the leaders of the Black movement were unwilling to put up with the racist policy of the trade union bureaucracy any more. At the AFL-CIO convention in September 1959, Philip Randolph came forward with three resolutions proposing decisive measures against discrimination and segregation. The first demanded the expulsion from the AFL-CIO of two railroad unions, if within six months they failed to abolish discrimination in admitting new members. The second proposed that unions based on segregation be dissolved. And the third called for a drastic overhauling of the AFL-CIO anti-discrimination department to make it more effective. Randolph's speech ruffled the top labor leaders. Meany rudely interrupted and snubbed the Black leader. "Who the hell appointed you guardian of the Black members of America?" he said.

In many of the old AFL unions and Railroad Brotherhoods an arrogant attitude to Black workers was traditional. In running their unions, many racist-minded leaders followed the tested method of "divide and rule". Animosity along ethnic and racial lines weakened the unity and solidarity of labor.

In one of his addresses, the famous American Socialist, Daniel De Leon, aptly characterized the aims of bourgeois propaganda, saying that it was to make workers "believe that 'Capital and Labor are brothers'. This is the important work for which the labor fakir is commissioned by the capitalists. He must make it plausible to the workers that they and their skimmers are brothers."²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

² Daniel De Leon, *Reform or Revolution*, Glasgow, s. d., p. 26.

Many decades have passed since then, but De Leon's characterization of bourgeois propaganda remains applicable.

The men who have taken over the governing bodies of the AFL-CIO have little in common with the rank-and-file union members. Ideologically, the union bureaucracy is no less a reliable bulwark of bourgeois society than the capitalists themselves. It has frequently demonstrated its devotion to the policies of the monopoly bourgeoisie through its tireless praise of the capitalist system combined with meekness in the face of draconic anti-labor laws. At the second convention of the AFL-CIO in 1957, Meany claimed that labor had no objections to the system itself. He urged workers not to fight but to persuade employers that labor has the right to a fair share of the wealth produced by this system. The efforts made by the high-ranking officials of the federation to reconcile the interests of labor and management did not go unnoticed. The *Fortune* magazine, the organ of the business circles, for example, wrote: "If the AFL-CIO has anything to be thankful for at this juncture, it is that it has George Meany as president."¹ Meany earned this testimonial through his many years of activity in the AFL.

But try as they might, the top labor leaders are unable to keep the unions in positions of passive defense. The representatives of the monopoly bourgeoisie themselves, through their anti-labor policies, willy-nilly undermine the conciliatory tactics of the trade union leaders and their appeals for class collaboration. It is the monopolies that teach the American workers lessons in class struggle, while the trade union bureaucracy keeps talking about "class harmony". But present-day American realities provide certain facts that knock the ground out from under their rhetoric. In a report to the second convention of the federation, the AFL-CIO executive council, for example, noted that since the AFL-CIO merger the offensive against the unions on the part of the NAM and the Chamber of Commerce had intensified. And in a New Year's message on December 31, 1960, AFL-CIO president George Meany said: "Then, of course, we have this drive by big business in which they are attempting to weaken and render

¹ *Fortune*, December 1957, p. 154.

impotent this movement and finally, perhaps, to destroy it."¹ There was no hint now of any kind of "class harmony" in this statement.

At an NAM convention in December 1960, Arthur Goldberg, a successful trade union lawyer who was to become Secretary of Labor in Kennedy's administration, later a Supreme Court Justice, and finally US representative in the UN, vainly urged the big business magnates to seek reconciliation with labor. "The challenge of the 60s," said Goldberg, "is to end the cold war which exists between labor and management in America today. The challenge of the new age is to get these two powerful groups to 'bury the hatchet'."²

Bourgeois historians do not deny that the conciliatory policy of the top labor leaders stems from their bourgeois way of life. They go even further, seeing factors in the evolution of the trade union leadership that bring it close to enterprise management. Economist Richard A. Lester, for example, notes that the difference between the wages of rank-and-file members and the salaries of the presidents of the big unions became even greater in the 1950s. Further, he writes: "As a union stabilizes and ages, the top leadership becomes more administrative in character and the differences between union executives and management executives diminish."³ Therefore, Lester feels, union leaders are interested in peaceful relations with employers.

It would be wrong, however, to disregard the positive role played in the struggle of the masses by the huge army of functionaries at the lower levels in the state labor councils of the AFL and CIO and the trade union locals. Most of them render invaluable service to the workers in conducting strikes, referendums, boycotts and so on. There were and are people among trade union officers who are guided by conscience as they honestly and selflessly carry out their responsibilities.

From time to time, discontent at the lower levels with the inaction of the central apparatus of the AFL-CIO brought the

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, December 31, 1960.

² *The Worker*, December 18, 1960.

³ Richard A. Lester, *As Unions Mature. An Analysis of the Evolution of American Unionism*, Princeton, 1958, p. 111.

situation within the federation to the boiling point. The leaders of the industrial unions, most of all subject to pressure from below, on more than one occasion criticized Meany's diehard policies. At a session of the AFL-CIO executive council in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in March 1959, Reuther got through a decision to organize a march of unemployed to Washington. Upon his arrival, Meany was furious over this decision and demanded that it be revoked, regarding a march of unemployed as nothing other than a Communist plot. When Reuther threatened to resign from a number of posts he held in the federation's structure, Meany agreed to a conference of unemployed to be held in Washington.

Endeavoring in every way to curb the unemployed movement, the executive council set a very low rate of state representation at the conference. Mass demonstrations of unemployed in the US capital could have served as an impressive warning from the organized labor movement. But the trade union bosses reduced the whole affair to tearful speeches and demagogic statements about the needs and sufferings of the unemployed.

By the third convention of the AFL-CIO, held in September 1959, the leadership of the federation found itself in the most difficult position. The unions were losing members under the impact of automation and unemployment, and the organizing drive promised in 1955 was still not under way. Meany's keynote address at the convention abounded in anti-Soviet attacks. Attempting to obfuscate the failure of his policy, he urged the delegates to think more not of the needs of the unions but of the fate of the nation.

A number of delegates raised the question of strengthening the independent political activity of the unions and creating an American labor party.

Michael Quill, president of the Transport Workers, spoke of the senselessness of counting on the so-called liberal Democrats. In his words, the Kennedy-Landrum bill¹ indicated that labor had no effective political weapon.

Even the president of the National Maritime Union, Joseph Curran, criticized the AFL-CIO policy of electing labor's

¹ He had in mind the Landrum-Griffin Act.

"friends" to Congress and then sitting back idly to see what they do for the unions. In his view, the Political Action Committee had proved itself to be ineffective as an instrument of the labor movement.

Such critical sentiments testified to certain shifts in the thinking of some trade union leaders. But this did not mean that a breach was made in the policy of opportunism. In his concluding speech Meany put everything back where it was before.

The arguments about labor's independent political action remained empty sounds for the AFL-CIO leadership. In the convention resolutions, concrete proposals were artificially pulverized and converted into general, often vague, declarations. Resolutions followed a typical standardized pattern. First an acknowledgement that the monopolies were out to destroy the labor movement, and then assurances of devotion to the capitalist system in which the monopolies dominate. The resolution on political education, for example, asserted that the goal of the Landrum-Griffin law was to destroy, blow up, and crush the labor movement. How should the unions respond to this attack by the monopolies? The resolution stressed that labor and management must resolve their differences within the framework of the free enterprise system.

The reality of the class struggle and the anti-labor policies of monopoly reaction bring the union leaders into conflict with their own philosophy of class collaboration. The desire of the monopolies to enfeeble and undermine the unions poses a threat to the labor leaders themselves and, ultimately, undermines their own positions. Therefore, although they declare themselves to be defenders of capitalism, they are forced to enter into struggle against the employers. But the extent of their militancy is often determined not by the demands of the workers, but by the monopolies' hostility and the vigor of their attacks. Faced with these attacks, the union leaders first of all seek ways of reconciling the conflict in order to retain respectability in the eyes of the ruling class. And it turns out that only "unreasonable capitalists" fail to understand the "usefulness" of unions and show foul ingratitude to their leaders, headed by George Meany.

CHAPTER XIV

US UNIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT, 1945-1965

The Second World Congress of Trade Unions was held in June and July 1949, its delegates representing 72 million organized workers from 48 countries. The composition of the congress and its decisions reaffirmed the desire of progressive forces for greater unity. The World Federation of Trade Unions, despite the withdrawal from it of a number of organizations, had even more members in 1949 than on the eve of the split. It remained a democratic organization, encompassing unions of various political orientations.

Nonetheless, the split of the WFTU and serious internal struggle in a number of national trade union centers between 1947 and 1949 had considerably weakened the forces of the working class. The labor movement was going through a difficult and complex period. Reaction was continuing its onslaught. The American imperialists, having launched the cold war, sought to suppress or weaken the forces of socialism and the international working class, and on more than one occasion during this period they brought the world to the brink of war. The formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Korean war, the remilitarization of West Germany—these were the dangerous actions of this period.

The peace movement which came into being in the early postwar years and in which the working class played a prominent role had achieved considerable strength. The Second World Congress of Trade Unions called upon all working people to struggle against the arms race. The leading organizations of the WFTU, especially the trade unions of Europe, were very active in the fight for peace.

In the upper echelons of the American trade unions, however, chauvinistic sentiments, bordering on a call for the establishment of US hegemony over the whole world, manifested themselves with increasing frequency. William Hutcherson, president of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, wrote in 1948: "With American Labor, like America itself, dedicated to world leadership, a tremendous responsibility devolves upon every union officer and every union member."¹ Because of their adherence to bourgeois ideology most of the rightist trade union leaders were ready to accept the idea of world dominance. All the actions of the ruling circles of the country connected with the cold war found support not only in the AFL leadership but in the CIO leadership as well.

During the years of the cold war, the trade union bureaucracy supported the State Department not only through resolutions but by vigorous actions. And these actions were most often carried out behind the backs of the organized workers. Most of the unions did not even touch on foreign affairs problems at their conventions, and conducted no mass referendums, remaining passive in areas that had no direct bearing on the economic interests of the workers. In the early 1950s, the adverse consequences of militarization had not yet manifested themselves as strongly as they would later. Moreover, a certain section of the American labor force enjoyed high-paying jobs and a number of other benefits that the development of war production gave them.

The picture, however, was different in other countries whose workers the American imperialists sought to harness to the cold war chariot. The working class of Western Europe felt the full force of the consequences of the arms race—the freezing of wages, cutbacks in allocations for social needs, inflation, soaring prices, and the intensification of internal reaction. The cold war policy, the arms race, the danger of a new war—to all this the European working people responded with active protest. Despite the split in the labor movement which existed in a number of European countries at the end of

¹ Quote from: Maxwell C. Raddock, *Portrait of an American Labor Leader: William L. Hutcherson*, New York, 1955, p. 319.

the 1940s, the Communist parties and progressive trade union centers of Europe constituted an impressive force. Their influence was felt in the unceasing struggle of the European proletariat. A prominent role in organizing resistance to the policy of militarization and the arms race was played by the WFTU. That was why the American labor leaders were bent on impeding its activities at whatever cost.

After the split of the WFTU, the American labor leaders intensified their campaign to create a new international organization. Meetings of European labor representatives were held, and disagreements over the tactics of struggle against the WFTU were now noticeably ironed out. Green and his associates felt that their line of rejecting the possibility of any relations with the WFTU had proved to be correct. They had been working from the very outset for the creation of a new international trade union center to counterbalance the WFTU, and redoubled their efforts after the British TUC and the CIO withdrew from the WFTU. A decisive step along this road was made in June 1949, when an international conference of US and West European trade unions and a number of organizations from Asian, African and Latin American countries was held in Geneva. Taking part in the conference were 127 delegates from 38 trade union centers and 12 trade secretariats.¹ At the end of July, a Preparatory Committee² that had been created in Geneva met in London to discuss a draft constitution prepared by the TUC.³

The Committee acknowledged the CIO's right to representation on an equal footing with the AFL—something the CIO had fought for from its very inception. The AFL went along with the Committee's decision, taking into account the changes that had taken place in the character of the CIO. Another factor was the position taken by the British, who wanted, by cooperating with the CIO, to strengthen their own positions and prevent the AFL from dominating the new organization. During talks between the AFL and TUC in the spring of 1949,

¹ Lewis L. Lorwin, *The International Labor Movement. History, Policies, Outlook*, New York, 1953, p. 264.

² Eric L. Wigham, *Trade Unions*, New York, Toronto, 1958, p. 223.

³ Philip Taft, *The A. F. of L. from the Death of Compers to the Merger*, p. 387.

they declared that they could not imagine an international trade union organization without the CIO.¹ At the ninth convention of the CIO in November 1949, there was already no left-wing opposition, so that now the rightist leaders easily won the approval of their international policies, particularly with respect to the break with the WFTU and the creation of a new international organization.

The draft constitution was sharply criticized by the American delegation. It did not like the fact that the draft referred only vaguely to struggle against communism.² In the end, the Americans succeeded in getting some of the wording they did not like deleted. Many bourgeois writers (L. Lorwin, A. Steinbach) have noted that it was thanks to the efforts of the AFL that "the statement adopted by the London Congress was free from traditional socialist doctrines".³

On November 28, 1949, a constitutional conference convened in London. Present were 261 trade union delegates from 59 countries, representing 48 million trade union members.⁴ On December 7, the conference adopted the constitution of a new organization, which was to be called the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). The Americans' desire to dominate the ICFTU showed itself at the conference. They sent a large delegation at the highest level, including Green, Meany, Dubinsky, Woll and others from the AFL, and Reuther, McDonald, Haywood, Ross and others from the CIO. The representatives of US labor praised the American economy and the "independent" role of their unions, and promised to help the unions of other countries.⁵ But behind all these phrases lay the wish to convert the new organization into an instrument of struggle against communism.

¹ Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*, p. 386.

² *Ibid.*, p. 388.

³ Lewis L. Lorwin, *Op. cit.*, p. 269; *National Labor Movements in the Postwar World*, ed. by E. M. Kassalow, Northwestern University Press, 1963, p. 40.

⁴ John P. Windmuller, *American Labor and the International Labor Movement 1940 to 1953*, New York, 1954, p. 157.

⁵ See ICFTU, *Official Report of the Free World Labour Conference and the First Congress*, London, 1949, p. 89.

Having succeeded in creating another international organization to counterbalance the WFTU, the American labor leaders ran into considerable difficulties almost immediately. The WFTU not only continued to exist, but actually strengthened its positions. On more than one occasion, the working class of Europe moved to block the military plans of the USA. The American leaders attempted through the ICFTU to make the European workers reconcile themselves to the arms race and the cold war. In April 1951, the official organ of the ICFTU carried an article by Meany in which he said: "Our defense program must be based on an international approach. In formulating policy or in providing machinery for its execution, we must never lose sight of America's position of international leadership."¹ Later, at the second congress of the ICFTU in 1951, the American delegates continued to insist on the need to increase the anti-Communist activity of the confederation.²

However, many European union figures did not support this demand, a fact reflected in the decisions of a session of the ICFTU executive committee, also held in 1951. After that session, the AFL leaders did not conceal their displeasure with the European sections of the ICFTU for being "too soft" on communism.³ They demanded of the ICFTU and its president, Vincent Tewson, a more determined struggle against the communist danger.

The ICFTU affiliates from Europe and underdeveloped countries took a different position from that of the American unions on a number of questions. Afraid that they might lose control over the ICFTU, the American labor leaders stepped up their activity in the confederation and intensified their drive to split the international labor movement. Even after the ICFTU was set up, the AFL and CIO retained their independent missions in Europe. Particularly extensive subversive work in other countries was done by the Free Trade Union Committee which was founded by the AFL leaders⁴ and

¹ *Free Labour World*, April 1951, p. 5.

² See *ICFTU. Report of the Second World Congress*, Milan, 1951, pp. 410-11.

³ George Morris, *American Labor: Which Way?*, New York, 1961, p. 96.

⁴ *AFL, Proceedings*, 1951, p. 12.

operated both in Europe and in America. On the basis of the Inter-American Confederation of Unions, which they had established in 1949, an Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT) was formed in 1951. While ORIT was formally a branch of the ICFTU, it was in fact under the control of the American labor unions.

The leaders of the AFL and CIO supported such organizations created in Europe in the late 1940s, as the Force Ouvrière in France,¹ the Italian Labor Union (Unione Italiana del Lavoro), which was under the influence of the Social-Democrats, and the Italian Conference of Labor Unions (Confederazione Italiana dei Sindacati Nazionali dei Lavoratori), which collaborated with the Christian Democrats. The American trade union leaders rendered great assistance to such organizations, seeing in them a weapon of struggle against the Communists.²

Despite all their efforts, the American labor leaders failed to win the support of the broad masses of European working people for the foreign policy course of American imperialism. "It is becoming clearer each day that the basic objectives of Western foreign policy which came into being with the Marshall Plan in 1947 are not being achieved and perhaps never will be."³ This became particularly obvious in 1954, in connection with the failure of the American "positions of strength" policy. After the Geneva Summit Conference of Great Powers in 1954 there was a noticeable relaxation of international tension, which was an important success for the peace forces.

But the relaxation of tension was given a hostile reception by the more zealous advocates of cold war in the American trade unions. Thus, at the AFL convention in 1954, Meany accused Britain and France of seeking what he called to "make a deal" with the Soviet Union and China.⁴ He described the relaxation of international tension that followed the conference as a defeat for the foreign policy of the United States. "I am sure

¹ *Ibid.*, 1954, p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, 1955, p. 294.

³ Irving Brown, "A.F. of L. Representative in Europe". *The American Federationist*, September 1953, p. 32.

⁴ *AFL, Proceedings*, 1954, p. 204.

that all will agree that the international situation has deteriorated in the last few months and that our position of leadership ... had been somewhat toned down. We find anti-American sentiment in various parts of the world."¹

In the mid-1950s, the similarity between the foreign policy position of the American labor leaders and that of the most reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie became increasingly clear. It was not surprising that in 1954 American labor leaders rebuked the British Labour Party for sending a delegation to the USSR and China.² Also that year, in Los Angeles, the 16th convention of the CIO adopted resolutions expressing basic adherence to the Wall Street war program, support of West German rearmament, and slanderous attacks on the Soviet Union.³

While expressing their opposition to the domestic policies of Dwight Eisenhower, the unions voiced no opposition to the government's foreign policy. But even during that difficult period of the cold war, especially between 1952 and 1955, voices were raised in protest against the frankly imperialist line pursued by the top labor leaders. The Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, for example, expressed apprehension lest this line lead to another world war, and the United Auto Workers spoke out, albeit timidly, for negotiations between the USSR and the USA. Compared with the actions of the working people of other countries, the movement of protest against the cold war was very weak in the United States, but it should not be underestimated.

By the mid-1950s, a new relationship of world forces had come about. Capitalism entered a new stage of its general crisis. The colonial system was undergoing intensive disintegration. Imperialism had already lost its power over the greater part of mankind, while the world socialist system was exerting increasing influence on the course of events.

As a result of these developments the ruling circles of the USA encountered greater and greater difficulties in imple-

¹ AFL, Proceedings, 1954, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 459.

³ See *Political Affairs*, January 1955, p. 14.

menting their foreign policy, and, consequently, resorted to more vigorous ideological campaigns. Although they had their own powerful machinery for carrying on ideological work, US power elite assigned no small role in this field to conservative labor leaders who supported the foreign policy line of the monopolies. In this connection, the American bourgeoisie took special cognizance of the fact that the labor movement had become a leading force in the capitalist countries and was acquiring increasing importance in the developing countries. That is why it gave US labor figures the job of establishing contacts with their counterparts abroad with the idea of persuading them to side with the United States.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the rank-and-file American unionists exerted increasing influence on their leaders on domestic issues, forcing them to criticize certain defects of capitalism. At the same time, the labor leaders were still given a free hand in foreign relations, as a result of which the more conservative elements headed by Meany set the tone. Even before the merger of the AFL and CIO, the rightist leaders of the two organizations found a basis for cooperation first of all in the field of international affairs. After the merger, in Meany's words, "all policy statements, decisions and proposals relating to international affairs have been unanimously adopted by appropriate organs of the AFL-CIO".¹

In the first years after the merger there was indeed a unity of views in this area between the leaders of the former AFL and CIO. At that time, most American labor leaders were strongly influenced by the idea of America's "world leadership". This idea was supported then even by such generally progressive leaders as A. Philip Randolph, who felt that, just as America filled this role in the world as a whole, the AFL-CIO was the leader of the international labor movement. And K. F. Feller, US labor representative at the TUC convention in 1961, told the British unionists that the United States had inherited "a fair portion of the obligation of world leadership, which you in Great Britain bore almost alone".²

¹ *International Free Trade Union News*, June 1957, p. 5.

² *Report of the Proceedings at the 93rd Annual Trades Union Congress*, Portsmouth, 1961, p. 398.

The American labor leaders' objectives in their international activities were to ensure for themselves a dominating position in the international labor movement and to undermine the WFTU and the trade unions of the socialist countries. These activities were permeated with the spirit of anti-communism, and in most cases carried on in contact with government organizations, especially in cooperation with the State Department. In particular, wide use was made of such diplomatic posts as the labor attachés in the US embassies in most countries. As a rule, appointments as labor attachés went to people who were connected with the labor movement and had experience in US trade union work. The leaders of the AFL-CIO had the deciding voice in their selection and appointment.

With the help of these people, the AFL-CIO executive council and the State Department were kept informed about the situation in the labor movements of other countries. In the spring of 1962, at a meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association, the then Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg expressed confidence that "US unions will continue to play a vital role in preventing Communist infiltration of the international labor movement", and stressed that it was imperative to accelerate the US labor attaché and labor information services in all parts of the world.¹

The AFL-CIO international affairs department maintained close ties with foreign embassies in the USA, especially with those which also had labor attachés.

The US labor leaders pinned great hopes on the Co-operative for American Remittances Everywhere (CARE). Established back in 1946, it sponsored the sending of parcels to American relatives and friends in Europe in the first postwar years. In the mid-50s, CARE already encompassed 23 organizations and spread its actions to many countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America. Its board of directors included Matthew Woll, Victor Reuther and other leading union officials. Every year, CARE sent food parcels to various countries, but the recipients were not so much people in need as people whom Americans needed. In 1959, over 4,000

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, May 12, 1962.

parcels went to South Korea, and another 3,000 to Hong Kong. No smaller numbers were sent to other countries.

In the early 1960s, American labor leaders got a chance to make use of the Peace Corps that was established in 1961 as an agency under the US State Department. The AFL-CIO leadership well understood that the chief unofficial aim of this corps was to combat communism. Even in Congress, the AFL-CIO leaders more than once stressed the necessity of giving careful political training to the corps members, explaining to them the character of American democracy and the capitalist system.¹ The AFL-CIO leadership gave the Peace Corps administration much assistance in recruiting and training corps candidates. Many union figures acted as consultants in this connection.

In urging union members to join in the work of the Peace Corps, the top labor leaders were fully aware that besides philanthropic tasks, the corps members carried out assignments of a purely political nature, and not infrequently conducted intelligence and subversive work. This fact was brought out by labor representatives of a number of developing countries in which the corps operated.

The American labor leaders sought to exploit not only national but also international organizations, especially the International Labor Organization (ILO), whose annual conferences the American delegates used for propaganda purposes. With the growth of the international labor and national liberation movements, however, the balance of forces in the ILO began to shift in a direction unfavorable to the US unions, which provoked the displeasure of leaders like Meany.

But the rightist labor leaders in the USA pinned their biggest hopes on the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions which they themselves had created. To be sure, they were to run into certain difficulties here as well.

From its very inception, the ICFTU showed signs of internal discord. Many of the Americans' actions drew criticism from ICFTU affiliates from other countries. The Americans aroused displeasure by their attempts to build relations with

¹ *Ibid.*, August 19, 1961.

unions of other countries from a position of superiority. The US labor leaders hoped that the merger of the AFL and CIO would strengthen their position in the ICFTU. But serious difficulties awaited them.

The ICFTU was not a homogeneous organization. It included long-established US and European unions as well as young labor organizations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The latter group criticized the positions taken by the ICFTU leaders on issues relating to the national liberation struggle. The ICFTU leaders displayed timidity in anything having to do with the liberation of peoples from the colonial yoke. Their caution and inaction drew protests from the working people of colonial and dependent countries.

The Americans in the ICFTU were gambling on the fact that the USA had no large possessions and had itself, in the past, struggled against British colonialism. Hundreds of books were written in the United States about the so-called anti-colonial tradition of the New World. In their speeches, many statesmen and trade union leaders claimed that the anti-colonial revolution of the mid-twentieth century was "a continuation of the American Revolution of 1776".¹ But this propaganda put them at odds with their British colleagues, who, moreover, were unhappy about the American leaders' claims to dominance in the ICFTU.

For their part, the US labor leaders usually spoke with disapproval of the strong influence of socialist traditions in the labor movements of Europe. They were also displeased with the political nature of the trade union movements in Europe, and bragged about not following the example of European trade unions that ranked themselves with political parties.

There was no unanimity among the Americans on the question of how their relations with the European trade unions should be built. Meany's supporters stuck to the cruder methods of frightening the Europeans with the communist bogey, and went out of their way to emphasize the role and "successes" of American unions in the struggle against communism. "France, Italy and Germany today would be under the domination of Communist unions if not for the hard

¹ *Political Affairs*, February 1965, p. 26.

work and actual dollars contributed by American trade unionists," George Meany said.¹

But not all American leaders were in agreement with this line. There were leaders in the AFL-CIO (Walter Reuther, David Dubinsky and others) who had a long history of close ties with European right-wing Social-Democrats. They operated in a more flexible and refined way, laying emphasis on the common goals of US and European labor organizations and advocating closer cooperation with the socialist parties of Europe.

These leaders began speaking more and more about the Social-Democratic organizations of Europe having broken with Marxism, and the need to distinguish between democratic socialism and "communist totalitarianism". This is just what the official organ of the AFL called for in 1962 when it said: "One need not accept the doctrines of democratic socialism to realize that its adherents are true democrats who are uncompromising enemies of communism and all other forms of dictatorship."²

After the AFL-CIO merger, the Americans felt much more self-confident in the ICFTU and continued to work for dominance in it. Back in 1953, they had succeeded in getting their supporter, Omer Becu, into the presidency. However, the main figure in the ICFTU leadership was the General Secretary, which post was held for a long time by J. H. Oldenbrock, a protégé of the British. His functions were sharply weakened by the creation in 1955, at the insistence of the Americans, of the post of organizational director, who was to be in charge of all ICFTU activity in the developing countries. This important part of the work was thus taken out of the General Secretary's domain. The struggle lasted almost a year, and finally in June 1956, at a meeting of the executive bureau, C. H. Millard, a US-oriented Canadian, was appointed to the director's post. Even after that, however, the American and British press continued to report on the "titanic internecine struggle for power" in the ICFTU.³

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, September 20, 1958.

² *The American Federationist*, February 1962, p. 3.

³ *Free Labour World*, No. 85, July 1957, p. 1.

On March 18, 1957, the London *Times* pointed to the "internal dissension" that was hampering the ICFTU. Indeed, in October 1956, the international affairs department of the AFL-CIO had prepared a set of nine proposals aimed at reorganizing the ICFTU leadership. Meany tried to show that they were designed to improve the work of the ICFTU,¹ but subsequent events showed that they were really an instrument in the struggle for power.

At the sixth congress of the ICFTU in 1959, the US delegates came out against Oldenbrock and demanded the reorganization of the confederation's governing bodies. The British press in an attempt to analyze the reasons for the dissension within the ICFTU noted that the Americans' position was extremely anti-communist and "negative", while other delegations wanted to see some "positive" activity too.

The AFL-CIO delegates submitted an anti-Communist resolution for the consideration of the congress. One British delegate called it an "anti" document.² It was not, of course, that the British reformists had a better liking for Communists. It was merely that the Communist parties had considerable influence in the West European labor movement, and in the course of the class struggle working people with differing political views often acted jointly. Hence the differences between the tactics of the European and the American labor leaders. When the internal contradictions and struggle for supremacy within the ICFTU are borne in mind, the nuances in tactics become more understandable.

The AFL-CIO leaders won a partial victory at the sixth congress. Although Oldenbrock was re-elected General Secretary, a resolution acknowledged the need to reorganize the ICFTU.³ Before another year had passed, the Americans succeeded in removing Oldenbrock and putting Omer Becu in his place. "The Oldenbrock resignation foreshadows a sweeping reorganization of the ICFTU structure," the AFL-CIO newspaper predicted. In describing Becu, it noted especially that he was a "bitter anti-communist".⁴

¹ See *International Free Trade Union News*, June 1957, p. 5.

² *ICFTU. Report of the Sixth World Congress*, Brussels, 1960, p. 431.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 623.

⁴ *AFL-CIO News*, July 2, 1960.

Events unfolded rapidly after that. In November 1960, Meany was elected to replace Tewson as chairman of the international Solidarity Fund, on which the activity of the ICFTU in the developing countries largely depended. In December, at a meeting of the ICFTU executive bureau, Meany urged that the reorganization be accelerated. And finally, that same month, the AFL-CIO leaders resorted to blackmail and diktat to achieve their ends, for it was then that their executive council withheld the AFL-CIO contributions to the Solidarity Fund with the aim of forcing the ICFTU to reorganize and to appoint an American, Irving Brown, as assistant to the General Secretary.¹

While pressing on for dominance in the ICFTU, the Americans had no intention of stopping their independent activities in various parts of the world. But this line displeased the TUC. It was not without reason that in tendering his resignation Oldenbrock expressed the hope that "the international activities of affiliated national centers would be carried out through the ICFTU".² But in January 1961, Meany let it be known that the AFL-CIO "would continue independent activities in the world labor field".³

Subsequent events showed that although the American labor leaders gained a dominant position in the ICFTU, the confederation was still far from working the way they wanted. On the eve of its eighth congress in July 1965, the situation became very tense as representatives of the European unions again raised objections to the independent activities of the American trade unions.

Differences within the ICFTU increased, especially in connection with the expansion of the national liberation and labor movements. The trade unions of Asian, African, Latin American countries judged the sincerity of the ICFTU by its deeds, and were unhappy about the fact that the confederation's leadership often remained inactive when it should have been doing something to assist the national liberation struggle. Especially sharp criticism was voiced at the sixth congress of

¹ *Ibid.*, January 28, 1961.

² *Information Bulletin*, Nos. 13-14, July 1-15, 1960, p. 79.

³ *AFL-CIO News*, January 28, 1961.

the confederation as delegates warned that if the situation did not change, the ICFTU would suffer losses. There were good grounds for this warning, and at the seventh congress (1962), the president of the ICFTU had to report a tendency toward a weakening of the confederation's activity. A number of delegations again levelled sharp criticism at the leadership, some saying that they would withdraw from the ICFTU if the leadership did not change its policy. And indeed, after 1962, the trade unions of Cameroon, Nigeria, Algeria, Kenya and Tanganyika did withdraw.

The late 1950s saw a new upsurge of the labor movement in the capitalist countries. Under these circumstances, the leaders of the European reformist trade union centers found it considerably harder to justify the course imposed upon the ICFTU by the American labor leaders. Therein lay the reason for the growing discontent within the confederation, and especially in its national trade union centers, with the pro-American policies of the leadership. Delegates speaking at the sixth congress of the ICFTU in 1959 demanded that greater attention be paid to the struggle for the vital interests of the workers, rather than concentrating solely on the struggle against communism. And even one of the American representatives, Walter Reuther, admitted that "too often the free world, yes, and the free labor movement of the free world, tends to shape its policies and its programs in the image of our fears and our hatreds, in a kind of negative anti-communism".¹ Criticism of the confederation's anti-communist course was again heard at the seventh congress of the ICFTU.

Back in late 1955, the executive bureau of the ICFTU had banned contacts with the trade unions of the socialist countries and with the WFTU. A resolution on this question repeated a resolution passed by the unity convention of the AFL and CIO,² a "coincidence" that the American press pointed out frankly.³ American trade union figures were apprehensive of any unity between Socialists and Communists, or unity of labor movement. This was especially clear with respect to the events

¹ ICFTU, *Report of the Sixth World Congress*, p. 308.

² *Free Labour World*, No. 107, May 1959, p. 208.

³ *AFL-CIO News*, December 24, 1955.

in France in 1956, when a government of the Socialists came to power for the first time since 1947. As soon as this happened, an AFL-CIO representative went to see the leader of the Force Ouvrière, Bothereau, but the latter reassured his colleagues, saying that he would oppose a popular front.¹ As concerns the situation in Italy, the Americans were pleased with the fact that in 1956 the leadership of the Italian Socialist Party rejected unity of actions with the Communist Party. But later, they had doubts about ISP declarations, since the Socialist and Communist unity in the labor movement was preserved.

On more than one occasion the ICFTU rejected WFTU proposals for joint action on urgent problems in labor's struggle. This position drew criticism from within the ICFTU itself, for a number of its affiliated organizations were desirous of unity. At congresses of the TUC, delegates from local organizations pressed for contacts between the TUC and unions of the socialist countries, as well as between the ICFTU and the WFTU.

This trend disturbed the AFL-CIO leaders. They insisted on continuing the cold war in the international trade union movement, but this position met with disapproval in other ICFTU affiliates. As General Secretary of the WFTU Louis Saillant said, "the ICFTU and its leadership now face this dilemma—to pursue their policy of cold war in the trade union movement and isolate themselves from the trade union movement, or, on the contrary, to tone down the cold war policy in the trade union movement so as not to be isolated themselves".²

In the late 1950s, differences increased within the ICFTU also on the question of war and peace. The urge for peace was growing stronger among working people everywhere, although, as mentioned earlier, it found weaker expression in the United States, and the rightist leaders there simply ignored it. But in other capitalist countries, reformist figures could not disregard the sentiments of the working people. The AFL-CIO leaders were unhappy with the anti-war position of the TUC. In 1960, 1962 and 1964, British Trades Union Congresses

¹ *Ibid.*, February 18, 1956.

² *World Trade Union Movement*, No. 1, January 1965.

rejected the Conservatives' foreign policy based on nuclear arms race. The congresses also condemned the policy of providing bases on British soil for American submarines carrying Polaris missiles.

Little wonder that the American labor leaders, who supported the foreign policy of their government, were indignant over any attempt by labor leaders in other capitalist countries to pursue policies that did not coincide with their views. But such attempts became more and more frequent. During its winter session in 1965, the executive council of the AFL-CIO stated irritably that the ICFTU was going downhill. The rightist American labor leaders had real cause for dissatisfaction, for in 1965 they ran into serious difficulties in connection with the US policy in Vietnam: they approved of that policy, but many ICFTU organizations, following the example of the 97th British Trades Union Congress, were demanding an end to the hostilities.¹

At an American Legion convention, the AFL-CIO leadership admitted that there was growing dissatisfaction with US policy within the ICFTU, but tried to explain it as stemming from "misinformation" in the European trade unions.

In creating the ICFTU, American labor leaders had hoped to see the WFTU isolated and destroyed. But the Sixth Congress of the WFTU in 1965 not only showed that the Federation was growing numerically, but also demonstrated its growing maturity and determination to stand up for the interests of the working people.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the national liberation movement became truly worldwide, now embracing the colonial countries of Asia and Africa and the economically dependent countries of Latin America. The imperialists had no intentions whatever of giving up voluntarily and without struggle those advantages and profits which the possession of colonies and the control of their economies gave them. Mindful of the scope of the struggle and the new balance of forces in the world, the imperialist powers sought new methods

¹ See *Labour Research*, October 1965, p. 159.

by which to perpetuate their exploitation of peoples. The chief aim of their policy was to keep the developing countries, both colonial and newly free, within their sphere of influence.

The changes that had taken place in the world during the postwar period made the American ruling circles pay very close attention to the labor movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America. "It is vitally important," Vice-President Nixon said in his report on a trip he made to Africa, "that the United States government follow closely trade union developments in the continent of Africa."¹

What did the American trade union leaders take to these countries? What kind of ideological baggage did they bring with them?

The rightist union leaders understood that the age of colonialism was over. They were compelled to declare that an end had to be put to colonialism. Year after year, resolutions condemning colonialism and declaring the right of peoples to independence were adopted at conventions of American trade unions. But it was only the 19th century colonialism that was condemned, that is, traditional forms of colonialism, the most vivid expression of which were the policies of such colonial powers as England, France, Portugal, Belgium, etc. The American labor leaders laid particular emphasis on the right to independence of the peoples of Africa, particularly those that were under the dominance of European colonial powers.

By focussing its criticism on the old traditional forms of colonialism, the trade union leadership of the USA distracted the attention of the people of underdeveloped countries from new forms of enslavement, or neocolonialism. Whenever Meany criticized the British and the French, it was not without purpose that he always painted an ideal picture of US relations with the Latin American countries.

While they were compelled, under existing circumstances, to speak of the right of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America to independence, the American labor leaders at the same time never entertained the notion that these peoples should in future determine their own destinies, much less that they should choose a non-capitalist way of development.

¹ *International Free Trade Union News*, June 1957, p. 1.

The objective of the propaganda the American trade unions carried out in those countries was to help the imperialists keep the former colonial countries within the capitalist system.

The American labor leaders have a long history of interfering in the labor movement of Latin America and seeking to implant so-called "free trade unionism" there.

In the second half of the 1950s, the national liberation movement rose to a new level in Latin America. Encountering growing resistance from organized workers there, the American imperialists tried to weaken it by means of splitting and subverting the labor movement. As in other parts of the world, this job was carried out by the rightist labor leaders from the USA.

The American trade unions put their main stakes on the Inter-American Regional Organization (ORIT) of the ICFTU. ORIT vigorously implanted anti-communism in the minds of Latin American working people, at the same time extolling the "progressive" role of the USA. One ORIT message said, for example, that "it is impossible to imagine, at least with any degree of realism, any development of Latin America without United States assistance".¹

The Americans did not conceal their aims. Thus, AFL-CIO Latin American representative Serafino Romualdi once said that the work of his trade unions in this region "mainly consists in efforts to prevent totalitarian forces, especially Communists, from controlling unions from where they could sabotage production and transportation of raw materials".²

The AFL-CIO leaders portrayed Yankee imperialism as a disinterested neighbor looking after the welfare of the peoples of the southern continent. They declared that capitalism, in the sense it is understood abroad, no longer existed in the United States.³ In 1956, a delegation headed by Meany visited Latin America.⁴ The US embassies there gave receptions in honor of the delegation, paying lip service to "cooperation among the American family of nations".⁵

¹ *Free Labour World*, No. 57, March 1955, p. 39.

² *AFL-CIO News*, January 28, 1956.

³ *Ibid.*, March 3, 1956.

⁴ See *The American Federationist*, January 1957, p. 13.

⁵ *AFL-CIO News*, December 15, 1956.

The AFL-CIO stepped up its work in Latin America, exploiting for this purpose its dominant position in ORIT. But at the very same time, the ICFTU also became active in Latin America. In 1957, it sent its representative to a session of the ORIT executive committee and, to the displeasure of Meany and Romualdi, the ICFTU took an active part in its work. The representative of the American unions at that session, William F. Schnitzler, declared that "our Latin American brothers ... are very proud of their achievements and capabilities" and that "most of them are reluctant to admit the need for outside direction or supervision".¹ By "outside direction" he had in mind interference by the ICFTU, and criticized "the tendency to relegate the US affiliates to a secondary position" in ORIT.²

Using a "trade union variety" of the Monroe Doctrine, the US labor leaders in 1958 undertook steps to gain complete dominance of ORIT. They demanded larger representation in its executive bodies and sought to alter its program of activities.³ They were worried about the political actions the masses were taking against reactionary dictatorships. In the second half of the 1950s, the peoples of some Latin American countries overthrew their *caudillos* (Venezuela, Colombia). A big role in this struggle was played by the working class and its Communist parties, which inevitably heightened their influence.

The demagoguery of labor leaders who asserted that dictators and Communists were equally unacceptable to them showed itself most clearly in the case of Cuba. The Confederation of Cuban Workers (CCW) was a member of ORIT. Eusebio Mujal, who headed it at the time, supported Batista's dictatorship. Although the North American "democrats" condemned his regime in word, they sided with the position taken by Mujal and the CCW in deed. In 1958, an AFL-CIO delegation, including among others Paul Phillips, Serafino Romualdi and Emil Rieve, visited Cuba and expressed

¹ *The American Federationist*, April 1957, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³ *Ibid.*, May 1958, p. 23.

satisfaction with the conciliatory position of the Cuban trade union leaders. The latter had declared that their unions would not take part in political struggle, that is, they would not fight against Batista's dictatorship. Playing on the principle of "non-interference" in the internal affairs of other countries, Meany said in 1958 that the AFL-CIO was "reluctant to pass individual judgment" on Mujal's position or to assume that it knew better than the CCW how to protect the interests of the Cuban workers.¹ However, after the revolution in Cuba the US labor leaders abruptly changed their line and openly interfered in the internal affairs of the Cuban trade unions. They were frightened by the radicalism of the popular masses, in which they saw a threat to capitalism in Latin America.

In November 1959, the AFL-CIO executive council sent a telegram to the tenth congress of the Cuban trade unions, in which it welcomed the overthrow of Batista, at the same time expressing alarm over the consequences of that act. It promised to help the Cuban trade unions, but on the condition that they retain their ties with ORIT and the ICFTU and keep up the struggle against Communist influence.

When it became clear that the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship was leading to radical changes in the country, the American labor leaders condemned the Cuban revolution, raising a hue and cry about "Castro's Communist advisors",² a "personal dictatorship", etc. The Cuban unions, having now become mass organizations of working people, were subjected to slanderous attacks.

The AFL-CIO supported the US government in the Cuban question. In January 1961, the AFL-CIO leadership allocated \$10,000 for assistance to the Cuban counter-revolutionaries,³ and a month and a half later called upon the Organization of American States (OAS) to take decisive measures against Cuba.⁴ The AFL-CIO and ORIT repudiated the revolutionary trade unions of Cuba, declaring that they were illegal, while at the same time proclaiming the fugitive reactionaries from the

¹ *The American Federationist*, May 1958, p. 25.

² *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, January 1960, p. 6.

³ *AFL-CIO News*, January 14, 1961.

⁴ *Ibid.*, March 4, 1961.

executive committee of the former CCW the "only legal" representatives of the Cuban working people.¹

Struggle against the Cuban revolution constituted one of the main tasks the leadership of the American trade unions took upon themselves. In 1962, the AFL-CIO executive council called upon all labor organizations of the Western Hemisphere to urge their governments to suspend trade with Cuba, while the leadership of the National Maritime Union pressed Congress to halt aid to any country that furnished its ships for delivery of Soviet goods to Cuba. Union President Joseph Curran went as far as calling on maritime workers of all countries to boycott cargo ships bound for Cuba. The American labor leaders' hostile attitude toward Cuba manifested itself even more during the Caribbean crisis in October 1962.

The victory of the Cuban revolution had a great impact on the anti-imperialist and labor movements of the Latin American countries. After 1959, ORIT's influence fell considerably. The example of the Cuban trade unions, which had broken with it and the ICFTU, had considerable repercussions. That same year, the Third Congress of the Venezuelan Confederation of Labor also voted to break with the ICFTU. The US labor unions declared this decision to be the result of "political blackmail" by the Communists.²

Some ICFTU and ORIT organizations expressed dissatisfaction with the activities of the headquarters in Latin America. A. Diaz, president of the Union of Colombian Workers, said at the Sixth Congress of the ICFTU: "In the case of Latin America, our people want to see ORIT playing a part in their conflicts, and in their economic and social problems.... If this does not happen, then the ICFTU will have lost for ever the opportunity not only of increasing its affiliates, but also of retaining those which it has at present in Latin America."³

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a trend became discernible within the Latin American labor movement toward the creation of a continental organization, independent of ORIT

¹ *Ibid.*

² *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, January 1960, p. 1.

³ *ICFTU. Report of the Sixth World Congress*, p. 315.

and the ICFTU. The executive committee of ORIT qualified this as being the result of Communist intrigues, and called upon all organizations to launch a systematic counter-offensive. In the meantime, the executive council of the AFL-CIO decided that, henceforth, 30 per cent of its contribution to the ICFTU's Solidarity Fund should be used only for financing activities in Latin America.

The AFL-CIO did, however, draw some definite conclusions for itself after the victory of the Cuban revolution, and was now trying to work out a more flexible approach to struggle against the growing national liberation movement. In one of his articles, Romualdi observed that "trade unionism in Latin America was founded upon the concept of 'class struggle' imported from Europe at the close of the last century".¹ In his words, the AFL-CIO's "chief concern is the promotion in every country of a constructive type of non-political trade unionism".²

Many American leaders felt that anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolutions were inevitable, their beginning just a matter of time. "Revolutions are under way," said Stanley Ruttenberg, head of the AFL-CIO research department. "The question becomes, what kind of revolution and why?"³ It was to this that the US trade unions were ready with an answer. If changes were bound to occur, let them be reduced to a minimum and not affect the foundations of US dominance in Latin America.

US labor leaders often talked about the plight of the working people in Latin America, the reason for which they saw not in capitalism, but in the "inefficient use" of the foreign capital invested in their economies. Wrote Ruttenberg: "Experience shows that the misdirection of private and public capital, not capitalism, caused problems."⁴ They conceded that, theretofore, private foreign capital had been used in Latin America only to develop certain industries, mainly extractive. The victory of the Cuban revolution and the growth of the anti-imperialist movement now forced them to speak of the

¹ *The American Federationist*, November 1959, p. 20.

² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³ *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, June 1962, p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*

need to develop the infrastructure (the building of roads, ports, electric power stations, hospitals, schools, etc.) and to carry out social measures.

The AFL-CIO increased its brainwashing operations among Latin American unionists. A program for training labor leaders was worked out in 1961,¹ and in April 1962 it was put into practice when the American Institute for Free Labor Development began to function in Washington.² Schnitzler declared that the main purpose of the institute was to teach Latin Americans how to combat Communist penetration of their unions.³ The *AFL-CIO News* said: "The Institute for Free Labor Development is financed jointly by labor and industry to help Latin American Unions meet the Reds by training their leaders."⁴ To be sure, the money on which the institute operated came not only and not so much from the unions as from the government and from monopolies that had investments in Latin America.

The rightist American labor leaders did not restrict themselves to ideological activity alone. They also engaged in splitting activities. Although they tried to conceal this aspect of their work from the public and the union membership, a few facts that came to the surface give a clear picture of the methods used.

As soon as a danger to US dominance arose anywhere in Latin America, AFL-CIO agents were sent to the trouble spot. In late 1961 and early 1962, for example, a sharp struggle between left and right elements began in the labor movement of the Dominican Republic, and almost immediately John McLellan from the AFL-CIO was on the scene. With his help, the rightists brought about a split in the labor movement. In February 1962, workers organized a demonstration in Santo Domingo, during which an American flag and effigies of McLellan and Fred Somerford (a labor relations expert with the US Embassy) were burned near the US Consulate; the two were accused of interfering in Dominican labor affairs.⁵

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, May 20, 1961.

² *Ibid.*, September 22, 1962.

³ *Ibid.*, January 26, 1963.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, March 17, 1962.

Another clear example of American interference in the affairs of Latin American trade unions was seen in British Guyana. After the elections of 1961, when the government of Cheddi Jagan came to power, more AFL-CIO representatives came to British Guyana in a matter of 18 months than had been there in the preceding 18 years. And all with one main objective—to organize active opposition to the progressive government which the labor leaders of the USA immediately christened Communist.

Their interference in the affairs of the trade unions of British Guyana took various forms—from efforts to set local unionists against the left-wing leadership, for which purpose the Americans arranged special seminars, to open support of anti-government actions.

Actively engaged in splitting activities in Latin American labor movements were graduates of the Washington-based American Institute for Free Labor and of an institute run by ORIT in Mexico. The American labor leaders themselves said that the graduates of their institute distinguished themselves in Venezuela, Honduras, Bolivia, British Guyana and Brazil. The institute operated on an annual budget of \$1,000,000,¹ a significant portion of this sum serving the purpose of containing the struggle of the working class of Latin America for independence and against American imperialism.

Similar methods were used against progressive labor movements in other parts of the world, including Asian countries.

The Americans did not regard Asia as a favorable field of combat with communism. Because the national liberation movement there had already reached impressive proportions in the early postwar years, the rightist US labor leaders saw that they could not achieve their ends by operating on their own, as they did in Latin America. They staked their main hopes on the ICFTU, and on its Asian regional organization created in 1951 and the Asian Trade Union College founded by the ICFTU in 1952. The college was, in fact, financed by the ICFTU Solidarity Fund, the main part of which consisted of AFL-CIO contributions. Among the instructors there were many specialists in problems of the American labor movement,

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, August 17, 1963.

and American literature on the labor question was the main source used in the training program. The students were fed the theory of class collaboration and had apolitical and neutral attitudes to the national liberation movement cultivated in them. The working committee of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), an affiliate of the ICFTU, had good reasons to point out in its resolution that “the training imparted by the college has been superfluous and devoid of ideological fervor which is the essence of the trade union education program suited to the genius of Asian countries and particularly India”.¹

The Americans sought not only to impose their own ideology on the students, but through them to effectuate American policy in that country. They had, in the opinion of the leaders of INTUC, turned the college in Calcutta into a center of cold war propaganda.² According to the Indian *Blitz* magazine, “in the name of anti-communism what the college wanted to achieve was to train American agents and infuse them into the trade union movements of different countries in the region to strengthen American influence in a vital section of these countries’ economy”.³

Many of the graduates did, in fact, become agents of the American trade union leaders in the labor movement of Asia. At the bidding of the latter, they conducted subversive work aimed at splitting organizations and creating new unions under their own leadership. Moreover, these actions were often taken even against organizations affiliated with the ICFTU, in particular against INTUC.

The Indian progressive press cited facts showing that many of the graduates “had been found to be working under extraneous directions with money provided to them, the sources of which they could not satisfactorily explain”.⁴ Such students started organizing trade unions independent of INTUC, and sought their affiliation with the International Trade Secretariats, known to be US dominated organizations.⁵

¹ *Link* (Delhi), April 22, 1962.

² *Ibid.*

³ Quote from: *Forward* (Colombo), May 4, 1962.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

Blitz wrote: "Substantial sums are provided by the US government through the American Federation of Labour to buy people in the trade union movements of the countries covered by the college."¹

In cases where the ICFTU had discredited itself and could not be used to good advantage any more, the US labor leaders turned to the International Trade Secretariats, which were officially independent of the ICFTU, as a vehicle for their subversive work.

The AFL-CIO leadership urged its unions to play an active role in the trade secretariats, and between 1959 to 1961, another seventeen American unions became members of trade secretariats in their fields. Through these secretariats, the US unions sought to establish direct contacts with the industrial organizations of India, over the head of the national centers. An INTUC report said: "This method of working in foreign countries without a proper coordination between the national centre and the ITSs is bound to lead to unnecessary misunderstanding which ultimately will harm the very cause of solidarity of the workers which the ITS claims to stand for."²

The US labor leaders sought ties with Indian labor organizations. Indian trade union leaders were invited to visit the United States, where they were given the usual ideological brainwashing treatment. Also drawn into the orbit of American influence were people whom the Indian government sent to the United States to study American industrial production methods. For example, a group of young engineers from India came to the United States for this purpose in 1958, whereupon the steelworkers' union arranged a three-day seminar for them in Washington. This was part of a program the union had worked out with the help of some companies, universities and technical colleges.³ One of the sponsors and lecturers at the seminar was the legal counsel of the steelworkers' union, Arthur Goldberg, soon to become Secretary of Labor.

Considerable work in inculcating the "American concept" was also conducted by US trade union figures who made trips

¹ *Forward*, May 4, 1962.

² *The Indian Worker*, June 11, 1962.

³ *The American Federationist*, January 1959, p. 24.

to Asian countries.¹ In 1958, for example, Joseph D. Keenan, secretary of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and Harry H. Pollak, a member of the AFL-CIO international affairs department, were sent to act as "unofficial ambassadors" of American trade unions at a trade fair held in New Delhi. With their help a brochure was distributed among Indian workers describing "the constructive views of the US worker and his union regarding productivity, standards of workmanship, cooperation in labor-management relations".² This was the same old sermon of "business trade unionism" which the leadership of the US trade unions was preaching in many countries. But the AFL-CIO leaders attached greater importance to it in Asia than elsewhere.

A combination of factors was causing alarm in the American ruling circles. First, the labor movement in Asia had become a major factor of political life. Second, the communist movement had grown. And third, the national bourgeoisie had decided it was to its advantage to follow a policy of neutrality and non-alignment. All this also made the US trade union leaders uneasy. As early as December 1955, Meany criticized Nehru's neutrality, holding that it played into the hands of the Communists.³ At that particular time, the executive bureau of the ICFTU was meeting in New York, and a representative of the Indian National Trade Union Congress was there. At a press conference, he expressed indignation over the position taken by Meany in criticizing INTUC for supporting Nehru's foreign policy. In a letter to Meany, he lodged a protest against this kind of AFL-CIO interference in the affairs of INTUC and threatened INTUC's withdrawal from the ICFTU.

This conflict was very significant. Usually, the AFL-CIO leadership declared all progressive organizations to be its enemies, labelling them Communist. The All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), against which the AFL-CIO leaders conducted subversive work, was an example. But Meany also levelled sharp criticism at INTUC, an affiliate of the ICFTU, for supporting Nehru's foreign policy.

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, December 20, 1958.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, February 18, 1956.

Meany's gross interference in the internal affairs of the foreign trade union center met with disapproval even within the AFL-CIO leadership itself. Walter Reuther, for example, expressed disagreement with Meany's actions and demonstratively accepted an invitation from Nehru to visit India.

The American labor leaders were always delighted with any trade union in Asia that was apolitical. Their magazines and newspapers carried articles written by figures in those trade unions in Asia that pursued a policy of class collaboration.

The Americans were quite concerned about the trade union movement in Japan, where the US military administration, with the help of the US labor leaders, was taking energetic steps to undermine progressive organizations. A General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (SOHYO) had been created in 1950, and the Americans looked forward to making it their mainstay in the Japanese labor movement. But instead, SOHYO became a progressive trade union center, and the Japanese labor movement as a whole took on a militant political character. This disturbed the Americans, who realized that their hopes had not justified themselves. So they altered their plans and threw their support behind the Japanese Trade Union Congress (ZENRO), an organization which the AFL leaders played no small role in creating in 1953.

But, despite all their efforts, year after year the Japanese labor movement became more politically active, its main thrust directed against American imperialism and its policy with respect to Japan. This naturally worried the AFL-CIO leadership. In the view of AFL-CIO vice-president Joseph Keenan, "the Marxist orientation of some of its [SOHYO's] leaders ... has helped block the development of trade unions in the sense the term is used in the United States, Canada and most of Europe".¹

The Americans' sympathies were with ZENRO, which turned out to be more inclined toward economic rather than political actions and apparently intended to pattern itself after American trade unions. As they did in India, the American labor leaders used every means they could to influence the thinking of labor figures in Japan.

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, July 2, 1960.

In Washington, they racked their brains over how to weaken the influence of SOHYO and bring about a change in the policies of its leadership. In 1961, a group of SOHYO functionaries was invited to the United States. It spent two months there and in Europe to study the influence of automation and technological changes on the status of the workers and on the labor movement.

At that time the Americans were still counting on a change in SOHYO's policies, saying that "although the SOHYO leadership continues to advocate a pro-communist 'neutralism' it has tended in recent years to place greater emphasis on trade union and economic activities".¹ What had to be done to please the US labor leaders was to give up political activity, particularly if it impeded the foreign policy plans of the American government. To achieve these aims, the Americans exploited the natural desire of Japanese working people for unity. From the beginning of 1962 the objective was to unite the two main Japanese trade union centers, SOHYO and ZENRO, with SOHYO rejecting any cooperation with the Communists and the policy of active neutralism.

SOHYO came under pressure from various directions. In late 1961, ICFTU general secretary Becu tried to get SOHYO to abandon its policy of neutralism, struggle for peace, opposition to the Japanese-American treaty, and cooperation with the WFTU. On November 10, 1961, Becu wrote a letter to SOHYO rebuking it for cooperation with the WFTU and the trade unions of the socialist countries. The letter was prompted by the participation of a SOHYO representative in an international trade union conference on the Berlin question. In a second letter, dated January 25, 1962, Becu brought up the question again, this time accusing SOHYO of abandoning the principle of positive neutralism in international affairs, on the grounds that its position on the Berlin problem was close to that of the Communists.²

By now, the US labor leaders were busy working to undermine and split the organization. Taking advantage of the fact that SOHYO affiliates were free to join the ICFTU if they

¹ *The Indian Worker*, August 15, 1962.

² See *SOHYO News*, February 10, 1962.

so chose, even though SOHYO itself did not belong to any international trade union center, they shifted the focus of their subversive work to individual trade unions. With this aim, the AFL-CIO leadership undertook energetic steps to strengthen ties between the American steelworkers', automobile workers', and electrical and machine workers' unions on the one hand, and the corresponding Japanese trade unions on the other.

Seeing the futility of their efforts to alter SOHYO's position or get it to join the ICFTU, the US labor leaders decided to work in a roundabout way. As in India, they went over the head of the national centers and sought to encourage Japanese industrial unions to join the International Trade Secretariats, in which American industrial unions played a leading role. This was what George Collins of the International Association of Metal Workers and James Carey of the Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers spoke about at a convention of the Japanese electrical workers' union in 1962.¹ And UAW president Walter Reuther was carrying out the same mission when he visited Japan in November 1962. But his visit pursued other aims as well.

At that time, Reuther was already criticizing the line George Meany was following in international affairs, and his union had begun to engage in independent international activities. Reuther himself was very active. Unlike Meany's behavior, which was ruled by anti-communism alone, Reuther's actions were dictated by other considerations, which corresponded to the interests of his union's membership. The point is that this militant union confronted large corporations that had subsidiary companies abroad, and the fight against such giants required unity of actions. Therefore the union leadership came out for establishing contacts with labor in the countries where there were subsidiaries of US corporations. Reuther's visit to Japan was partially prompted by such considerations.

Having given up hopes of bringing about a change in SOHYO's policies and its merger with ZENRO, the American labor leaders decided in 1962 to work for a unification of all conservative organizations in Japan so as to confront SOHYO with a united front of rightist trade unions. With their help,

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, June 9, 1962.

three trade union centers—ZENRO, Sodomei (Japanese Federation of Trade Unions) and Zenkanko (National Council of Government and Public Corporation Workers' Unions)—united in 1962 into a federation called Domei Kaigi, in which, for the time being, each organization retained its independence.¹ A constitutional convention was scheduled for November 1964 for the purpose of creating a new organization. Long before the convention, a Domei Kaigi delegation made a trip to Washington where it held talks with the AFL-CIO leadership. Statements by both sides said that the AFL-CIO welcomed the creation of a new organization, pledged its full support, and was counting on its cooperation. The aims of joint actions outlined in the talks included "combating communism" and strengthening the "influence of the ICFTU in Asia".²

The AFL-CIO attached such great importance to the unification of the rightist Japanese trade unions that Meany himself went to their convention. He was accompanied by David Dubinsky, James Suffridge, George Harrison, and head of the AFL-CIO international affairs department Jay Lovestone.³ After the convention, at which a new organization—DOMEI (Japanese Federation of Trade Unions)—was created, Meany met with two SOHYO leaders, Secretary-General Akira Iwai and President Ohta.⁴ However, the meeting did not justify the hopes of the American labor leaders, and soon thereafter they again lashed out against SOHYO, this time in the form of an open letter from Lovestone to Secretary-General Akira Iwai.

Actually, it is hard to call that document a letter; it was rather a lecture to the Japanese trade union leaders. It touched on SOHYO's political activities, its relations with the Communists, international ties and attitude to US policies. Lovestone expressed displeasure with SOHYO's political activity: "Why must a trade union federation—whose first task is the protection and promotion of the workers' interests—lend itself

¹ *Ibid.*, November 21, 1964.

² *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, August 1964, p. 8.

³ *AFL-CIO News*, November 14, 1964.

⁴ *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, January 1965, p. 4.

so much to furthering political aims...?" He urged that SOHYO put up a vigorous struggle against Communists in every trade union. "...In order to combat Communist Party control of unions one must fight against the activities of the individual Communists in the unions." He was also unhappy about SOHYO's ties with the WFTU and the trade unions of socialist countries. And, finally "we find it hard to understand the consistently unfriendly attitude of the top SOHYO leadership towards the United States".¹

That document was not only further evidence of interference by American trade unions in the internal affairs of labor organizations in other countries, but also proof of the failure of the whole preceding line that the leadership of the US labor unions followed with respect to the Japanese labor movement and its major organization, SOHYO. Particularly so since the SOHYO leadership administered a stinging rebuke to the American labor leaders in its reply to Lovestone's letter.²

It was not only in Japan that the American rightist labor leaders suffered serious failures. The state of affairs in Africa did not make them particularly happy either.

Even prior to the AFL-CIO merger, American trade unions, and especially the AFL, devoted a great deal of attention to developments in Africa. However, the positions of the old colonial powers were still strong there at the time, and the US labor leaders had to content themselves with the ICFTU's activities in that area. Indeed, the ICFTU, having created regional organizations in Europe, Asia and Latin America, had decided to extend its influence to Africa as well. But matters progressed with great difficulty. At the beginning of the 1950s, its leaders relied basically on the trade union organizations of the British colonies, especially those in Ghana. This was understandable, considering the fact that the British were still dominant in the ICFTU.

While they supported the ICFTU, the Americans nonetheless undertook independent steps in North Africa. At the AFL convention in 1955, it was noted that the US trade unions had done a lot "in preventing the Communists from perverting

¹ *AFL-CIO. Free Trade Union News*, January 1965, pp. 4, 5.

² *Ibid.*, April 1965, p. 4.

and distorting these great anti-colonial movements into Communist channels".¹ American propaganda in Africa was demagogic. Here too the US labor leaders tried to capitalize on the fact that the USA had never had any possessions in Africa and that it had itself once waged a war of liberation against England. They had advantages over their European colleagues, who were too closely linked with their governments to make a decisive stand in favor of the liberation of the colonial peoples.

While hailing the role of African trade unions in the national liberation movement, the US labor leaders carefully worked to bring about a change in the orientation of African labor figures. To this end, a project for organizing the training of African trade union figures in the USA appeared in 1957. At its August 1957 meeting, the executive council of the AFL-CIO allocated \$50,000 for training ten or twelve "promising young labor leaders from Central Africa".²

Despite all the effort put into it, the policy pursued by the Americans in the labor movement failed in a number of African countries. Their actions and support of US foreign policy were strongly criticized by prominent figures in the African trade unions. Such criticism was contained, for example, in a speech delivered by Tom Mboya at a press conference in the United States in 1959,³ and in a speech by the representative of the General Union of Algerian Workers at the third convention of the AFL-CIO during that same year.

George Meany, Jay Lovestone and other leaders were worried about the declining prestige of the American labor unions in Africa, and this problem was frequently discussed at meetings of the AFL-CIO executive council. In view of the sweep of the national liberation struggle, the AFL-CIO leaders had to acknowledge the right of the peoples of Africa to independence. They saw the inevitability of decolonization and were ready to accept it, but only within the framework of the capitalist system, which meant the granting of formal independence while preserving the economic dominance of imperialism in new forms.

¹ *AFL. Proceedings*, 1955, p. 295.

² *AFL-CIO News*, August 17, 1957.

³ *Ibid.*, April 18, 1959.

The AFL-CIO executive council was disturbed not only by its own failures in Africa, but also by a similar fall in the prestige of the ICFTU. There was a great deal of African dissatisfaction over the confederation's passiveness in the matter of supporting the national liberation movement. African trade unions showed an increasing desire for autonomy and the creation of a continental trade union organization, independent of the ICFTU.

A conference for the purpose of creating such an organization was slated for May 1960. On the eve of its opening, representatives of the AFL-CIO stepped up their subversive work in Africa. They focussed on Nigeria.

In Nigeria, in early 1959, two trade union centers had agreed to merge on the condition that one of them withdraw from the ICFTU. The result was a new organization, called the Trades Union Congress of Nigeria. A struggle developed between the right and the left trends within it. The rightists wanted the organization to affiliate with the ICFTU. Counting on their support, the American labor leaders launched a propaganda campaign in Nigeria. In April 1960, shortly before the above-mentioned African trade union conference was to open, a representative of the ICFTU, MacDonald Moses, went there. The actions of the rightists brought about a new split in the trade union movement and the formation of two trade union centers.

ICFTU agents were busy trying to get Nigerian trade unions to affiliate with the ICFTU. However, many union members were dubious about that organization.

Preparations for the All-African Trade Union Conference in May continued. The preparatory committee included representatives of Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, the United Arab Republic, Morocco, Tunisia and Uganda. The ICFTU and the AFL-CIO were bent on thwarting the conference. Simultaneously with the above split in the Nigerian trade union movement in April 1960, pressure was applied to the trade unions of Morocco, Uganda and Tunisia, and a press campaign of slander was launched against the unions of Ghana and Guinea. Previously, the Americans had put high hopes on the trade union movement of Ghana, expecting to keep it among their supporters. Now, however, they came down on

the Ghanaian leaders. Articles appeared in the American labor press accusing the labor leaders of both Guinea and Ghana of interfering in the trade unions of other countries.¹ The purpose of all this was to defame the local labor leaders and prevent the African trade union conference from taking place. As a result of their combined efforts, the ICFTU and AFL-CIO succeeded in getting the conference put off for a year. In the meantime, they took advantage of the postponement to work on creating their own regional organization in Africa.

An ICFTU African regional organization (AFRO) was created in November 1960 at a conference of ICFTU-affiliated African unions. It was a divisive move, since it was made just when the progressive labor organizations were preparing to hold the All-African Trade Union Conference. That conference opened in Casablanca in May 1961.

The rightists now faced the problem of what attitude to take to it. The ICFTU and the Americans resorted to an old and tested tactic: they accepted an invitation to the conference, but while there, tried to frustrate its work. Stepping to the forestage again was Irving Brown; as head of a delegation of observers from the ICFTU, he launched into vigorous activity. What the Americans were after in particular was to make sure the African trade unions retained their affiliation with the ICFTU. But their plans failed. Most of the conference delegates insisted on breaking with the ICFTU and creating an All-African Federation of Trade Unions. Their position precarious, the Americans walked out of the meeting even before a vote was taken, and set about working for a new conference and the creation of a second African center.

But the urge for unity in Africa was so strong that the Western leaders found it hard to use their old methods. Instead of taking the initiative towards creating a splitting organization, as they had done before, they had to work through African leaders who had not yet broken with the ICFTU.

Soon after the close of the Casablanca conference, a meeting took place in Geneva of representatives of some African unions

¹ See *AFL-CIO News*, July 30, August 6, 1960.

who had come there for a session of the International Labor Organization.¹ The leaders of the General Union of Senegalese Workers were entrusted with the initiative of calling a conference. A sharp protest came from major African trade union centers, but the conference was nonetheless convened in Dakar in January 1962. Although the Dakar conference itself did not go as smoothly as its organizers would have liked and most of the delegates actively supported the idea of unity, the Americans and the ICFTU managed to achieve their goal: a second African trade union center, the African Trade Union Confederation, was established.

The creation of this center increased the dissatisfaction of the African working people with the activities of the ICFTU. The ICFTU was even subjected to sharp criticism at a congress of its own regional organization (AFRO) in early 1964. And early next year, the executive council of the AFL-CIO had to admit the failure of the ICFTU's activities in Africa as it called insistently for steps "to improve the effectiveness of African affiliates of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions".² The best evidence of the failure of the American labor leaders' policy in Africa was the fact that a number of African countries embarked on a path of non-capitalist development despite the enormous efforts the Americans had expended to persuade them to follow the capitalist road and the example of the West.

For a long time the international activities of American trade unions and their position on foreign policy issues were wholly determined by a small group of leaders headed by George Meany. This group had assumed the monopoly right to speak on behalf of the American workers in matters relating to important international problems. This was facilitated by the traditional indifference of the rank and file in such matters.

True, in the early postwar years (especially between 1945 and 1949) there were more than just isolated cases of discontent among the rank and file and local organisations with the foreign policy line of the top trade union leadership.

¹ *Afrique nouvelle*, December 12, 1961.

² *AFL-CIO News*, March 6, 1965.

Later on, however, the rightist leaders managed to suppress such criticism.

The situation began to change by the end of the 1950s and early 1960s. Among the causes that brought about the change were the shift in the balance of forces between the capitalist and socialist systems, the United States' weakened positions in the capitalist world, and also difficulties in the country's economy, finance and foreign trade balance.

Of course, this was still a time when the expression of protest was hampered by the anti-communist hysteria and the persecution of progressive forces. Nonetheless, it was during this period that some functionaries began to break with Meany's line. At the beginning of the cold war, nearly all the conservative leaders had supported his line, but now some began to change their position. As early as 1956, the Communist Party noted that several groups could be identified within the AFL-CIO leadership according to their attitude to foreign affairs issues. Meany's group occupied an extreme rightist position and reflected the policies of big business. Reuther's group was hostile to communism but recognized negotiations. The Potofsky-Gorman group took a "positive attitude to disarmament", advocated "rejection of the policy of negotiation from positions of strength", and voiced "opposition to colonialism".¹

Of particular interest in this respect was Walter Reuther's group, which had previously given its full support to the cold war course. In the mid-1950s it began to dissociate itself from Meany, mainly on foreign policy questions. Under the changed conditions, Reuther felt that a more flexible course was needed. His position was influenced, of course, by old differences that had existed between the CIO and AFL, as well as by his connection with European Social-Democrats and the fact that his views on a number of questions were close to theirs. For example, at congresses of the ICFTU he sided with representatives of European trade unions who were shocked by Meany's blatantly imperialist position.

No small role in altering Reuther's views was played by

¹ *Political Affairs*, January 1956, pp. 15-16.

pressure from below. From 1953 on, his union passed resolutions at nearly every one of its conventions underscoring the necessity of negotiation, universal disarmament, an end to atomic tests, etc.

By 1960 an impressive group of leaders opposed to the Meany group had taken shape. It included, among others, Walter Reuther, Victor Reuther, Emil Mazey, Frank Rosenblum and P. Gorman, and its criticism of Meany's foreign policy course became increasingly sharp.

As time went on the contradictions were further aggravated. Meany stuck to his primitive anti-Soviet tactics. Resolutions of the fourth convention of the AFL-CIO in 1961 approved, as before, a policy from position of strength. However, there were delegates at the convention who disagreed with this course; they insisted on negotiations, expressed apprehension with respect to the remilitarization of West Germany, and called for universal disarmament.

The new approach to questions of war and peace came out more clearly at the fifth AFL-CIO convention in 1963. The AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department headed by Walter Reuther was very active at the convention. Most of the resolutions touching on problems of disarmament, the restructuring of the war industry for peaceful purposes and the Moscow agreement on a limited nuclear test ban were introduced by Walter Reuther.

The US aggression in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic increased the opposition to Meany's line. The Meany group continued to support the policies of the ruling circles. But while previously they had been able to create an atmosphere of war hysteria in the labor unions, a different situation took shape from the outset of open US interference in Vietnamese affairs. As the Communist Party magazine wrote, "public opinion in the United States is more suspicious of—and much of it, hostile to—the present Administration's policy in Vietnam than such opinion has been on any occasion since 1945".¹

The changes in the sentiments of broad sections of the public were bound to influence the nation's labor organizations as well. In these conditions, a considerable number of trade union

leaders came out openly against Meany's line. The sentiment in favor of peace was felt clearly not only in the small independent unions but even in the big AFL-CIO unions. The executive committee of the United Auto Workers criticized President Johnson's policy in Southeast Asia and the Dominican Republic, and urged that the parties concerned enter into peaceful negotiations through the UN.¹

In May 1966, conventions of the United Auto Workers, the packinghouse workers' union and the clothing workers' union passed resolutions demanding an end to the aggression in Vietnam. Delegates at the UAW convention spoke of the need to reach mutual understanding with the socialist countries. The union's leadership accused Meany and Lovestone of acting without taking the other members of the AFL-CIO executive council into account.

Although these objections were not enough to alter the position of the AFL-CIO leadership on foreign policy issues they nonetheless testified to the existence of serious disagreements.

However, the strongest rebuff to the rightist labor leaders came not from American progressive circles but from the progressive forces of the international labor movement.

A fresh upsurge of the labor movement in the capitalist world began at the close of the 1950s. By that time, the prestige and influence of the international communist movement had risen sharply, and progressive trade unions had considerably strengthened their positions.

While bourgeois sociologists were working hard in an effort to demonstrate that class boundaries in capitalist society were being erased, that the class struggle was dying out, and that the strike movement was withering away, the struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries gave the lie to these assertions. The new upsurge of the labor movement manifested itself in the growth of the strike struggle. The number of workers involved in strikes in the capitalist countries grew from 25 to 27 million in 1958 to 55 to 57 million in 1964.² Nor did the intensity of the strike struggle slacken in the following

¹ *Political Affairs*, April 1965, p. 31.

¹ *Ibid.*, October 1965, p. 37.

² *World Marxist Review*, No. 5, May 1969, p. 29.

two years. In the decisive battles fought during those years, new features of the labor movement became manifest. The economic situation at the time was favorable to capitalism, and because of this, labor's actions were more offensive than defensive in character. The strike movement grew considerably in scope and in its social base, with more countries and new social strata becoming involved in it. Actively joining in the struggle were white-collar workers, engineers and technicians, and skilled and better-paid categories of workers who had long been passive.

The nature of their demands also changed. The struggle frequently took on a political coloration as workers demanded broader trade union rights, defended democracy, and came out against the arms race. Intensified oppression by the monopolies and the consequences of the scientific and technological revolution also gave rise to new demands, among which the demand for broader trade union rights at enterprises was pressed with particular persistence.

The struggle of the working class in the late 1950s and early 1960s became more effective and demonstrated the working people's growing desire for unity.

The proletariat was becoming an increasingly influential social and political force on all continents. Its vanguard, the international communist movement, had grown considerably in size and strength. The ranks of labor organizations were reinforced by new detachments of workers in Asian, African and Latin American countries. Progressive labor organizations in the advanced capitalist countries also grew, and they were the main force in the struggle against the monopolies. Trade unions grew stronger in the socialist countries, too, where they expanded their functions considerably.

All this was conducive to a change in the balance of forces in the international labor movement in favor of those who stood on class positions. The prestige of the World Federation of Trade Unions, which the American rightist labor bosses had tried so hard to destroy throughout the postwar period, had risen sharply. The WFTU celebrated its 20th anniversary in October 1965 with a membership that had grown from 67 million in 1945 to 137.9 million by that time.¹

¹ *World Trade Union Movement*, No. 6, 1965, p. 32.

The WFTU had done much toward establishing and developing bilateral ties with the trade unions of other associations. The US labor leaders and the leaders of the ICFTU failed in their attempts to ban contacts with the trade unions of the socialist countries. Bilateral ties created favorable conditions for the struggle for unity, and frustrated the plans of the splitters. By the beginning of the 1960s, not only the WFTU but also labor organizations unaffiliated with it were coming out in support of international unity.

The rightist American labor leaders tried to hamper the struggle of the international working class, to undermine its unity, and to create obstacles in the way of progressive labor organizations. But many of their plans failed. They were unable to stop the ever-growing activation of the international revolutionary movement.

CHAPTER XV

THE VITAL ISSUES OF THE EARLY 1960s

The first half of the 1960s was rich in events, many of which had a direct influence on the labor movement. With the development of state-monopoly capitalism, the polarization of class forces increased. The ultra-right circles of the monopoly bourgeoisie were demanding a more aggressive foreign policy course, irreconcilable struggle against any opposition to such a course, and the use of repressive measures against the Communist Party, the labor unions and the Negro movement. They objected to the increasing role of the government in the economic life of the country, assessing this process as a tendency toward totalitarian power and the implantation of socialism.

The new Democratic administration was trying to speed up production growth, improve the balance of payments and stabilize prices. It intended to use tax policy and measures to hold down the growth of wages as an incentive for the monopolies to expand production. The recurring recessions, the low industrial growth rate and high unemployment were causing serious alarm in government spheres.

The moderates in the monopoly bourgeoisie regarded government interference in the economy as a necessary measure in view of the increasingly sharp class struggle. Although they were not satisfied with the price stabilization policy, they gave their full backing to government regulation of labor relations. In this sphere, government agencies acted not as "neutral mediators" in a bilateral dispute, but as a third side,

ostensibly representing the interests of the public, with its own demands and conditions. The government played the role of defender of a "public" that was without class features, opposing its interests (the so-called public interest) to the demands of the workers in order to limit the strength and possibilities of the labor unions in their negotiations with employers.¹ It also tried to limit, and wherever possible to bring to naught, strikes in the leading industries, by forcing the unions to seek peaceful settlement of disputes.

The struggle for power between the political parties, in which ultra-right elements—irreconcilable enemies of the working class—had become active, inevitably drew the unions into politics. The policies of state-monopoly capitalism intensified the demarcation of class forces, which brought the political and the economic aspects in the working-class struggle closer together.

The developing situation in the class struggle forced the unions to rouse the masses of organized workers to political activity—something they had formerly doggedly tried to suppress.

The presidential election of 1960 was of great importance to the American people. The domestic and foreign policies of the Eisenhower administration affected the vital interests of the basic mass of the population. The working people were bearing the greatest burdens.

This tended to give the edge in the election race to the Democratic Party, which sought in every way to dissociate itself from the Eisenhower administration's obvious failures. However, holding a majority in Congress, the Democratic Party carried a full share of responsibility for the political course of the nation.

The AFL-CIO decided without any hesitation to support the Democratic Party and its candidate for President, Senator John F. Kennedy, a career politician and son of a Boston millionaire. This decision was adopted by the overwhelming majority of the General Board, of which the principal officer of each affiliated national and international union was a member. The

¹ Lloyd Ulman, *The Labor Policy of the Kennedy Administration*, Berkeley, California, 1963, p. 1.

independent United Electrical Workers and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union announced that they would support neither Kennedy nor Nixon.

The ALF-CIO leadership attached tremendous importance to the participation of the labor unions in the election campaign, considering this to be task No. 1. The executive council sent a memorandum to the Democratic Party platform committee, in which it presented its position on domestic and foreign policy issues. Unlike a number of other statements and declarations, this document presented the demands of the workers in an objective light. The federation expressed concern about the stagnating economy, the growth of unemployment, and the insecurity of the great mass of workers' families. It noted that employers were automating production in order to reduce employment. In 1953, the then existing unemployment rate of 2.7 per cent was considered normal. By 1960, it had grown to 5 per cent, which was now also called "normal unemployment".¹

The low economic growth rate in the 1950s adversely affected the working people's condition. "Let us remember," the unions pointed out, "that we have not abolished poverty in this country. We still have over seven million families and single individuals whose total income is less than \$2,000 a year; and almost three million whose income is less than \$1,000. Those are shameful figures for America in 1960."² The federation suggested raising the minimum wage from \$1.00 to \$1.25 an hour, and to extend it to a larger segment of low-paid employees. It raised the question of shortening the workweek. The existing 40-hour week established more than 20 years earlier, the document said, should be updated as rapidly as possible to provide for a standard 7-hour day, 35-hour week.³ It urged increasing unemployment benefits to two-thirds of a worker's wage, and making them payable for 39 weeks.

In early 1960, the top AFL-CIO officials were still speaking against normalization of Soviet-American relations. In April of that year, on the eve of a meeting of heads of government in

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, July 9, 1960.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

Paris, the executive council called a conference in New York on foreign policy issues. Among the speakers there was Assistant Secretary of State Douglas Dillon, a spokesman for the interests of the Rockefeller monopoly. The blatant propaganda of intolerance toward a policy of international cooperation and peace in his speech embarrassed even some of Meany's tested associates, while others of their colleagues quite frankly doubted the correctness of this course. Al Hartnett, secretary-treasurer of the International Union of Electrical Workers, came out for establishing ties with Soviet trade unions, explaining that "there is no better way to improve an understanding between peoples than by direct contacts".¹ Victor Reuther, a member of the AFL-CIO's international affairs department, shared this view. He said the slogans of anti-communism did not bring "influence", and deplored the fact that, while the United States itself won its independence in revolution, "when revolutions of this character take place in other parts of the world we are frightened". He recalled that "we were silent when Batista was oppressing the people".²

For all the eagerness of the federation's leaders to demonstrate labor union unity on foreign policy issues, they were unable to bring this off. In this connection, *The New York Times* remarked that despite the surface politeness of the debate it revealed the same deep differences as those causing a split among the UN member-countries. The disruption of the summit conference in Paris drew protests from some labor unions. President of Ford Local 600 of the UAW Carl Stellato, for example, urged the people to call on Congress and the President to initiate a policy designed to bring about a speedy resumption of the conference.³

Taking into consideration the discontent in the unions, the AFL-CIO leadership felt obliged to state in its recommendations to the Democratic Party platform committee: "There must be no limit to our patience and persistence in seeking just and peaceful settlements of issues. In this spirit, our country

¹ *The Worker*, April 24, 1960.

² *Ibid.*

³ *The Worker*, The Midwest Edition, June 5, 1960.

should ... always keep open the door to negotiations with Moscow."¹

The Democratic Party and Kennedy built their election campaign with an eye to winning the support of labor. They generously dispensed promises to the workers as they heaped criticism on the domestic and foreign policies of the Republicans. Applying the motto that "the people must know the truth", Kennedy did not back away from the bitter truth about stagnation in the economy, chronic unemployment and the plight of the working people, particularly since he could put the whole blame for these ailments onto the Republicans. At a meeting in Detroit, Kennedy told workers: "Their slogan is 'You never had it so good.' But let them tell that to the 4,000,000 people who are out of work, to the 3,000,000 Americans who must work part time. Let them tell that to those who farm our farms in our depressed areas, in our deserted textile and coal towns."²

Giving wide publicity to such statements by the Democratic candidate, the labor leaders declared that "the election of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson as President and Vice-President, respectively, is in the best interests of the United States and of the labor movement; and we urge our members to give them full and unstinting support".³ The platforms of the two parties were compared in this appeal. The Republicans, it said, promised "diligent administration of both the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin Acts", while "the Democratic platform unequivocally pledges repeal of anti-labor and restrictive provisions of both acts, as well as adoption of an affirmative labor policy".⁴ The Democrats also pledged to repeal Section 14 (b) of the Taft-Hartley Act under which the states were allowed to pass "right-to-work" laws. The Democratic platform said: "Millions of workers just now seeking to organize are blocked by Federally authorized 'right-to-work' laws, unreasonable limitations on the right to picket, and other hampering legislative and administrative provisions."⁵

¹ *AFL-CIO News*, July 9, 1960.

² *The New York Times*, September 6, 1960.

³ *AFL-CIO News*, July 9, 1960.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Congressional Digest*, October 1960, p. 245.

The Democrats supported labor's proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$1.25 an hour and to have it extended to new categories of working people. According to labor data, more than 20 million low-paid workers were not yet covered by the minimum wage law. The Democrats promised improvements in unemployment benefits, saying that "we will establish uniform minimum standards throughout the nation for coverage, duration, and amount of unemployment insurance benefits".¹ But this was just an election promise, action on which was put off every time the Democrats came to power.

As for Negro civil rights, the top labor leaders did not believe in the promises of either the Republicans or Democrats. Both parties were split on this question, the AFL-CIO message said. Only one-third of the Republicans in Congress usually voted in support of civil rights bills. The rest "could consistently be found voting with the Southern Democrats, just as the Dixiecrat bloc voted with the GOP on economic issues".²

As noted earlier, in some elections the unions succeeded in getting confirmed enemies of labor defeated at the polls, and in electing, as happened in 1958, a majority of labor's "friends" to Congress. However, this did not alter the attitude of Congress toward them. During the first session of the 86th Congress in 1959, for instance, the anti-labor Landrum-Griffin Act was passed. During the second session in 1960, a number of bills connected with the needs of working people were defeated. An AFL-CIO pamphlet on the 86th Congress said that no Congress had ever rejected so many positive bills as did the legislators of the 86th Congress, and that the coalition of Republicans and Dixiecrats, ignoring the will of the majority, had turned Congress into a funeral parlor for bills on aid to depressed areas, schools, civil rights, housing and many other measures.

Comparing the platforms of the Republicans and Democrats, the leadership of the AFL-CIO could reveal nothing else but bipartisan unity with respect to foreign policy principles and militarization.³ The only difference was that the Demo-

¹ *Ibid.*

² *AFL-CIO News*, October 1, 1960.

³ *Ibid.*, September 3, 1960.

crats criticized the Republicans for slackening the pace of militarization. The Democratic platform said: "When the Democratic Administration left office in 1953, the United States was the pre-eminent power in the world. The Republican Administration has lost that position of pre-eminence."¹ The Democrats promised to "re-establish" US military strength, and to step up defense programs which they said were "now slowed down, terminated, suspended, or neglected for lack of budgetary support".² Undoubtedly, the weakest part of the Democratic platform in the eyes of millions of voters was its foreign policy plank.

Making a choice between the two bourgeois parties was particularly hard for Negro voters. At one time, in line with a tradition associated with Lincoln, Negroes had counted themselves as Republicans, and looked upon a Negro Democrat as a traitor. Beginning with the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, however, a considerable proportion of the Negro population began to support the Democratic Party.

In the South, Negroes were in actual fact deprived of the right to vote, despite the 15th Amendment to the US Constitution, which prohibits the denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen to vote on account of his race or color, and authorizes Congress to enact appropriate legislation to enforce this provision.

But now, the southern racists felt that even the tested means of intimidation and violence were not enough to halt the growing pressure of the Negroes. Some states introduced a complicated system of "literacy" tests at the time of voter registration. In Georgia, where Negroes made up almost half of the voters, a law was passed, under which Negroes who wanted to register had to answer thirty questions. In Mississippi, 98.4 per cent of the Negroes of voting age were denied the right to vote.

However, in the northern and western states, where the Negro population had grown rapidly as a result of migration from the South, opportunities for Negroes to take part in elections increased considerably. On the eve of the presidential

¹ *Congressional Digest*, October 1960, p. 237.

² *Ibid.*

election, a civil rights bill was introduced in Congress at the initiative of the Eisenhower administration. It provided for the elimination of discrimination in voting rights, education and employment. In response, the Democrats introduced more than one hundred compromise civil rights bills. The debate that ensued paralyzed the work of Congress, especially when the Dixiecrats resorted to the filibuster. From February 29, the Senate was kept in session round the clock, during which time the opponents of the bill were obliged to provide a steady stream of speakers, and their supporters, to guarantee a quorum.

For two months running the racist filibusters replaced each other on the floor of the Senate, beating all records for duration of obstruction. The result of this prolonged "debate" was a civil rights law in which not a trace of what the administration proposed remained. Even so, on May 6, 1960, President Eisenhower signed this law, apparently feeling that the goal had been achieved. The American press spoke of the unseemliness of this game the Democrats and Republicans were playing with the vital interests of the Negro people.

The new law concerned only the voting rights of Negroes; however, it did not guarantee them these rights. To win them, the Negro had to go through a whole labyrinth of courts. And even so, the last word remained with the local authorities, who could say that any given Negro did not meet the requirements of the State Constitution. Negro organizations called the law a swindle. Martin Luther King declared that both the Democrats and the Republicans were playing the hypocrite in the civil rights question.

The Communist Party of the United States participated in the election campaign as far as it could. On August 8, 1960, the National Committee published its election platform. It said that the party would have preferred to put up its own candidates for president and vice-president, but "that is not possible, only because of a whole series of restrictive laws—laws which violate our nation's Constitution and its Bill of Rights".¹ The Communist Party announced that it would not give any support to candidates of the bourgeois parties who

¹ *Political Affairs*, September 1960, p. 25.

stood on positions of the cold war, the arms race and anti-communism.

The Communists acknowledged the fact that the majority of the nation's workers supported the bourgeois parties; therefore, they felt that it would be unrealistic to boycott the elections since it "would not be understood by the broad masses".¹ The party rejected this tactic, but continued patiently and persistently to promote the ideas of independent political action by organized workers.²

On the whole, however, as in preceding years, the Communist Party had little influence on the course of the 1960 election race, for the means it had at its disposal for conducting a campaign were extremely limited.

The 1960 elections brought victory to the Democratic Party. Its candidate John F. Kennedy became President of the United States. Three factors played the principal role in Kennedy's victory: the active support of organized labor, a high percentage of the Negro vote, and the common desire of a broad cross-section of the American people for a change in administration and policy. However, the Democratic victory was a narrow one. The presidential votes were almost equally divided, with an edge of only one-half of one per cent sending Kennedy to the White House. Losing 22 seats in the House of Representatives, the Democrats retained 261 to the Republicans' 176. In the Senate, the figures were 64 and 36.

The labor unions expended no little effort in 1960 to strengthen the positions of the liberal-minded members of Congress. Of the 34 candidates running for the Senate, they supported 30 and succeeded in electing 18. Of the 437 candidates running for the House of Representatives, labor supported 337 and elected 187. As a result, as the AFL-CIO leadership conceded, "the composition of the new Senate in terms of liberals vs. conservatives remained basically unchanged".³

Thus, the first half of the 1960s was linked with the return of the Democratic Party to power. As for the top labor leadership,

¹ *Political Affairs*, September 1960, p. 23.

² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³ *AFL-CIO News*, November 12, 1960.

it was satisfied with the results of the elections. It lauded its own "correct line" in the elections, regarding the Democrats' coming to power as its own victory.

President Kennedy's labor policy placed the labor leaders into a difficult position. They did not wish to quarrel with the Democratic administration, but pressure from below forced them to make at least a show of opposition. This concerned above all the persistent demands of the workers for a shorter workweek as a means of combatting unemployment. This, of course, would inevitably lead to greater wage and salary outlays, a prospect that evoked irreconcilable opposition on the part of employers. Nor did the Democratic Party sidestep the issue; even during the election campaign it seriously objected to any reduction of the workweek. Later, it went even further, insisting on limiting the growth of wages.

This trend found practical expression in the "productivity formula" advanced by the President and his economic advisors. Under this formula, wages should not rise at a rate exceeding the average rate of productivity growth for industry as a whole. According to the estimates of the economic advisors, this stood at about 2.5 to 3 per cent per year. The unions were strongly urged to stay within the bounds of the "productivity formula"—in other words, to limit their demands for wage increases to 2 to 3 per cent, including also all fringe benefits. The employers in turn were asked to maintain price stability. The interests of the monopolies did not suffer, for prices continued to rise. The workers, however, ran into new difficulties.

The progressive forces in the movement for a shorter workweek saw the chance to activate the masses of workers. A Communist Party statement noted that "American workers face a threat to their most fundamental right—the right to a job. Millions of jobs have already disappeared.... Automation, modernization of equipment, corporation mergers, speedup, increased big business investments in manufacturing plants abroad—all have devoured jobs.... The most fundamental issue confronting American labor today is job security."¹

¹ *Political Affairs*, December 1962, pp. 7, 8.

The proceedings of labor union conventions and conferences in the early 1960s showed how vitally important the problem of job security had become for Americans of the most diverse occupations and trades. Delegates at the United Steelworkers' convention in September 1960 were concerned most of all about unemployment, automation, and the need for a shorter workweek. They pointed out that automatic machines by themselves were worthless if people could not buy what the machines produced. But the monopolies had their own calculations: the more workers a machine replaced, the more profitable it was. As a result of this kind of arithmetic, over 150,000 steelworkers were thrown out of work. As a means of solving the problem, many delegates demanded a 32-hour workweek without a reduction in pay.

The Harvester United Auto Workers Council declared in March 1961 that "the shorter workweek is the most important contractual demand and should be given first priority".¹

At the UAW convention in April 1961, delegates insisted that the demand for a shorter workweek be uppermost in negotiations with the automobile magnates. A delegate from General Motors Local 544 in Pittsburgh charged that the UAW was getting "wishy-washy" and lacked a strong position for negotiations. But, he said, "now is the time to get some of the fat off the GM turkey".² John Devito, president of GM Local 45 of Cleveland and the national leader of the 30-40-60 campaign³ in the UAW, told the convention that his local was ready to put up a fight. "We want to fight GM as a target," he said. "GM can afford it." UAW vice-president Leonard Woodcock assessed the convention's demand for a shorter workweek as a historic turn, "putting a stop to the retreat that the labor movement has been going through these last five years".⁴ As for Walter Reuther, he was against including the demand for a shorter workweek in the draft contract. Instead, he proposed a compromise "flexible workweek" formula.⁵

¹ *The Worker*, The Midwest Edition, March 26, 1961.

² *Ibid.*, May 7, 1961.

³ Reduction of the workweek to 30 hours while keeping wages at the 40-hour workweek level; and retirement on pension at age 60 instead of 65.

⁴ *The Worker*, The Midwest Edition, May 7, 1961.

⁵ Reduction of the workweek when unemployment increases, and a return to the 40-hour week when it falls.

Carl Stellato, president of the large Ford Local 600 in Detroit, described this proposal as an attempt to split the convention. He proposed declaring a one-hour strike as a sign of the unions' determination to fight for a shorter workweek. The convention disagreed with Reuther's arguments and included the 30-40 demand in the draft contract.

The transport workers', butchers', communications workers' and packinghouse workers' unions also passed resolutions to fight for a shorter workweek. With this wave of activity came sharp criticism of the top leadership of the AFL-CIO. Joseph Beirne, an AFL-CIO vice-president and president of the Communications Association of America, told the convention: "I must tell you, with regret and sadness, that the AFL-CIO seems ill-prepared for these 'challenging years ahead'. Simply stated, the leadership of the AFL-CIO has become neutralized under the dead-weight pressure of retrogression and bitter, conflicting jurisdictional interests."¹ Michael Quill, president of the Transport Workers Union, uttered many bitter truths about the AFL-CIO leadership at a convention of his union. He charged, among other things, that the labor leaders had been slow in recognizing the dangerous consequences of automation and failed to work out an effective fight to meet them. The TWU's goal, he said, was the 32-hour, four-day week, as an answer to automation.²

Quill continued his criticism in a letter to Meany, in which he said that all of the problems that had divided the AFL and CIO and brought them into conflict before their merger remained unresolved. In the six years since the merger almost nothing had been done to overcome racial discrimination in the labor movement or to organize the unorganized.

There was increasing criticism also from the industrial unions, in particular at the AFL-CIO convention in December 1961, in Miami Beach, Florida. In his speech at the convention Meany responded to his critics with frenzied attacks against "world Communism" and apology of the policies of the monopoly bourgeoisie. He urged cooperation between labor

¹ *The Worker*, July 2, 1961.

² *Ibid.*, October 15, 1961.

labor and management, and expressed amazement that anyone in the unions could think differently.¹

The main thing in the tactics of the top labor bosses was to skirt major issues that could aggravate the class struggle. They were willing to back resolutions deploring the hostile attitude taken by the monopolies and the government toward labor, but in practice they led the working class away from the burning issues of the times.

Noting that "America's organized workers had high hopes that the merger of the AFL and CIO six years ago would bring about new forward motion", a resolution submitted by the industrial union department for the consideration of the convention deplored the fact that, actually, "there has been little forward motion in the field of labor organization".² In his speech, Reuther said: "The rank and file were ready to march, but we did not lead them."³ "Either we grow and march forward," he warned, "or we stagnate and we slip back."⁴ Reuther proposed creating a fund for organizing the unorganized, and pledged on behalf of his union a contribution of \$1,000,000.

Representatives of the industrial unions displayed the greatest activity at the convention as they rocked the cumbersome bureaucratic machine of the federation leadership. They introduced resolutions on such urgent subjects as organizing the unorganized, civil rights, reducing the workweek, and repealing the anti-labor Landrum-Griffin Act. The delegation from the woodworkers' union introduced a resolution on disarmament. The transport workers proposed that the federation's decision to expel from the AFL-CIO two million organized workers on charges of corruption be put down as a mistake. In particular, the expulsion of the teamsters' union, in Michael Quill's opinion, was a deal between the AFL-CIO leadership, the McClellan Committee and Attorney General Robert Kennedy.⁵

¹ See *Proceedings of the Fourth Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO*, Washington, 1961.

² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-02.

The National Maritime Union of America supported the transport workers as it registered a protest against attempts to split the teamsters' union. Joseph Curran said: "We are in favor of organizing the unorganized. But I will oppose ... any attempt to disorganize the already organized. I think our main enemies are the employers. Our main enemies are the Goldwaters. ... We have enough of them, for God's sake, today. Let's not make more enemies simply because the label is not the label that we choose to suit ourselves."¹

The convention devoted much attention to the problem of automation. The facts in the matter were obvious and did not generate debate, and even the leadership of the federation did not display its usual tendency to soft-pedal the issue. A resolution was passed that said: "Radical innovations continue to affect the jobs of today's workers and threaten job opportunities tomorrow. Despite greater understanding of automation's meaning and some efforts to meet its impact, the nation has developed neither the economic nor the social programs necessary to insure automation's promise and to solve its problems."²

The resolution said further: "The Fifties taught America some automation lessons: As the vast new technology swept through basic industries, millions of workers in mining, railroads and manufacturing found their jobs destroyed and no new jobs in sight. Toward the end of the 1950s, another fact became clear: no part of America's working life was immune to automation's effects."³

President John F. Kennedy spoke at the AFL-CIO convention. He dwelled on the difficulties the youth of the nation faced, noting that "today there are already one million young Americans under the age of 25 who are both out of school and out of work. Millions of others are leaving school before completing their educations, destined to fall into a pattern of being untrained, unskilled, and eventually and frequently unemployed."⁴ He also stressed the importance of foreign

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

² *Ibid.*, p. 433.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

trade and a favorable balance of payments for preserving the military strategic positions of the United States in Western Europe and other parts of the world.

Expanding foreign markets, the President argued, was in the interests above all of American workers, since part of the nation's capital was flowing out of the country and American companies were building their enterprises in Western Europe, thereby increasing unemployment in the United States. "Are we going to export our goods, our crops, or are we going to export our capital?"¹ That, in the President's view, was the dilemma with respect to foreign markets. To resolve it, American workers would have to make sacrifices. "I am hopeful," he said, "...that those of you who are in the area of wage negotiations will recognize the desirability of maintaining as stable prices as possible."² The monopolies, inflating prices in their quest for profit, always put the blame for high prices on the worker and his allegedly excessive demands for higher wages. Thus, price stabilization meant nothing other than wage stabilization, or, in other words, a wage freeze.

The top labor leaders were quick to approve Kennedy's appeal for sacrifices on the part of the workers. "Don't worry about us," Meany declared. "We will cooperate 1,000 per cent."³ But many delegates at the convention did not share this sentiment. A resolution on wages unanimously adopted by the convention said that the unions will work for higher wages. In the debate on a resolution on foreign trade, delegates from a number of unions voiced serious objections to the President's foreign trade plans, citing the heavy consequences for workers of an increasing influx of imported goods. Enoch Rust of the United Glass and Ceramic Workers of North America took the floor, saying, "I arise in objection to many parts of this resolution." Further, he cited the example of how in Chicago one local union alone lost 20,000 members because the company began to import certain parts of its production output from abroad.⁴

¹ *Proceedings of the Fourth Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO*, p. 56.

² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-74.

Two things became clear at this convention: one was that the top leadership was sticking to its old tactic of "reasonable passiveness" with respect to the acute problems facing the labor movement, and the other was that there was growing dissatisfaction with this tactic on the part of the industrial unions. The overt opportunism of Meany and his myrmidons had become so odious that it was out of keeping with the moderate conciliatory course the leaders of these unions followed.

In August 1962, under pressure from the industrial unions, the AFL-CIO executive council decided to launch a broad campaign for the 35-hour workweek. Its resolution said: "The time has come for a basic change in the fundamental terms of employment in the United States."¹ The leadership announced at a press conference that the "talking stage" for the 35-hour week was over, and that from then on the AFL-CIO was going to fight on this issue with funds and forces both in Congress and in negotiations.² It should be borne in mind, however, that a great chasm lay between the federation's resolutions and their implementation. Much more important was the fact that this forced resolution reflected an upsurge of activity on the part of labor's rank and file. That is why the Communist Party of the USA attached great importance to it. In this regard, a Communist Party statement said: "The growing struggles for the right to work and live led to the historic decision of the AFL-CIO Executive Council on August 13, 1962 to launch a national campaign for a 35-hour week with no reduction in weekly pay. This campaign can present the first major defense of labor's right to work since the 1930s."³

But there was no unity in labor's actions. The initiative of union locals was stifled by the top leadership. The opposition put up by individual leaders at conventions and conferences did not bring about any noticeable change in the policies of the labor union elite. For that matter, these opposition leaders themselves turned off onto the well-worn path of compromises

¹ *The Worker*, August 19, 1962.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Political Affairs*, December 1962, p. 7.

and concessions whenever they got involved in a strike action. The real worth of convention and conference resolutions and the tactics of the labor leaders was given the surest test in the strike struggle.

The strike movement in the first half of the 1960s unfolded in the midst of a changing economic situation.

The fourth recession after World War II began in May 1960 and lasted about eight months. Overall industrial production fell by 8 per cent. As in earlier years, this recession affected basically the heavy industry. Durable goods production, in particular, fell by 13.6 per cent.¹ The steel, automobile and coal industries suffered most of all, while the chemical and power industries increased production by 7 to 8 per cent. Recovery began in early 1961, and in August production reached the pre-recession level, although enterprises producing durable commodities pulled out of the recession only in October.² On the whole, production grew by 7.6 per cent in 1962.³

After a brief decline in 1963, the growth rate was restored in 1964.

In the five years from 1960 through 1964, US industrial production rose 21.4 per cent, or an average of 4.3 per cent per year,⁴ which was higher than the average annual growth (2.5 per cent) of the preceding seven years. Among the factors contributing to the upturn were increased government investment, the total sum of which for 1961-1963 was \$10 billion, and a higher volume of housing construction.

The inflow of private capital into industry increased. This was stimulated by various incentive measures undertaken by the government and, what was most important, direct and indirect tax relief to corporations. Investment in new production and equipment over the five years grew by 26 per cent, and in 1964 amounted to \$44.9 billion.⁵ The corporations were making record profits (in 1964 alone they went up 14 per cent).⁶ Industrial recovery, however, did not bring unemploy-

¹ *Survey of Current Business*, December 1961, p. S-3; April 1963, p. S-3.

² *Ibid.*, December 1961, p. S-3, December 1962, p. S-3.

³ *Ibid.*, April 1963, p. S-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, August 1965, p. S-3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. S-2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. S-1.

ment down. It is significant that while industrial production had increased more than 20 per cent over the five years, unemployment remained unchanged (in 1964 there were 3.9 million unemployed—as many as in 1960).¹ The high unemployment rate in the early 1960s had a certain restraining effect on the strike struggle.

Serious barriers to the strike movement were created by the government's policy of active interference in labor disputes and its attempts to rule out or curb strikes in the basic industries.

The Kennedy administration urged the unions to show moderation and restraint in their wages-and-hours demands. The union leaders tried to maneuver between the demands of the workers and the policy of the government. On the one hand, they worked to maintain good relations with the White House and, on the other, tried to avoid stimulating sharp opposition in the unions. But not all of them managed to keep their footing on this slippery platform. Even James Carey (International Electrical Workers Union) and David McDonald (United Steelworkers), well experienced in the policy of class collaboration, were voted out of office by the members of their unions in late 1964.

The strike struggle went on in those years under difficult circumstances in which intensified development of technology was attended by an especially high level of long-term unemployment. The problem of employment and the struggle for jobs assumed exceptional and vital importance for wage earners. As can be seen from the table, there was no significant change in the number of strikes, but the number of workers involved dropped markedly in 1962 and 1963, to rise again in 1964.²

	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
Number of stoppages	3,333	3,367	3,614	3,320	3,655	3,860
Workers involved (thousands)	1,320	1,450	1,230	941	1,640	1,480
Man-days idle (millions)	19.1	16.3	18.6	16.0	22.9	23.3

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1965, p. 1047.

² *Ibid.*, August 1963, p. 1014; May 1964, p. 624; August 1965, p. 1047.

Rising to struggle were construction workers, seamen, longshoremen, railroad workers, auto workers, missile plant workers, commercial airline personnel, typographical workers and others.

The electrical workers had to operate under the difficult conditions of a split into two unions and the mutual animosity of their leaders. The demands of the United Electrical Workers (UEW) headed by Albert Fitzgerald, independent since its expulsion from the CIO, were frustrated by the conciliatory activity of the leaders of the AFL-CIO affiliate, the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), particularly its president, James Carey. In August 1955, the IUE signed a five-year contract with General Electric under which the workers received a pay raise but no supplementary unemployment benefits. The independent UEW rejected this kind of contract, but a single-handed struggle had no prospect of success. For five years the electrical workers in accordance with the contract refrained from striking, incurring serious losses in wages and other benefits. In 1960, as the contract neared expiration, the IUE began negotiations for a new contract with General Electric and Westinghouse, endeavoring to win concessions from them without a strike. One of its demands was for supplementary unemployment benefits.

A UEW conference held on March 20, in Washington, sharply criticized the conciliatory policy of the IUE leadership. The conference noted that the consequences of the five-year contract, which had "resulted from a deal between IUE Pres. James Carey and GE's Vice-Pres. Boulware", were that "wages in this industry have fallen behind in relationship to other industries and important contract protections have been eroded".¹ Thus, wages were kept down even though company profits were at a high level. For example, GE's profits per worker went up from \$2,463 in 1955 to \$4,518 in 1959. The profit per worker made by Westinghouse had doubled in that same period. At the same time, the number of production workers had been cut by 40,000. As stressed in a conference

resolution, in conditions of automation organized workers had to seek a reduction of the workweek with no reduction in weekly pay, because all other means already tried by the unions—supplementary unemployment benefits, for example—did not solve the problem. In 1955, when the United Auto Workers first won supplementary unemployment insurance benefits, there were 760,000 men in production. Five years later, 150,000 workers were jobless. The same situation was observed in the steel industry. In signing the contract with the steel companies in early 1960, McDonald declared that supplementary unemployment benefits "cannot solve the basic problem of chronic unemployment in major industries".¹

The UEW, consequently, came out with the demand for a reduction of the workweek to 35 hours with no reduction in weekly take-home pay. It also sought to have employers agree that when they relocated their plants to other parts of the country, they would guarantee jobs to union members with retention of seniority. The unions could win these demands only by acting in unison. But it was just this kind of unity that Carey would not agree to, although Fitzgerald twice made proposals of this nature to him.²

General Electric and Westinghouse skilfully capitalized on the discord between the unions. They tried to impose a three-year contract giving a 17-cent-an-hour wage raise, but on the condition that the sliding scale based on the cost of living index be cancelled.³ Under the previous contract the workers received a wage increase of 32 cents an hour, plus an additional 10 cents an hour according to the sliding scale.

Turning down the demand for supplementary unemployment benefits, GE and Westinghouse offered their own, substantially curtailed, program of unemployment relief. A worker laid off from a GE enterprise would begin to receive benefits from the company only after he had exhausted the state benefits due him, which amounted to no more than 30

¹ *United Electric News* (later referred to here as *UE News*), April 4, 1960.

¹ *UE News*, August 29, 1960.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, September 12, 1960.

per cent of his wages. Moreover, he would have to have at least three years of service with the company to qualify.

The companies also agreed to a shorter workweek, but on the condition that the weekly pay would be cut, something that was already being practised by some enterprises. The UEW rejected the company's proposal. On September 27, Fitzgerald made his second offer to Carey to combine efforts, but received no reply.¹

It was obvious that a struggle in which each union acted alone was bound to fail since neither union had a majority of workers at the companies' enterprises.

On October 7, 1960, the AFL-CIO IUE called a strike without adequate preparation. There was no organization or unity among the workers. Some locals continued to work, while the strikers looked on with bitterness as their fellow-workers crossed the picket lines. The plants continued to operate, and the pickets were clubbed and arrested by the police. The workers fought staunchly, but to no avail. On October 27, Carey capitulated and accepted the company's terms.²

On January 10, 1961, the ferry and tug boat workers in New York harbor went out on strike. The railroad companies that owned the tug boats had decided to reduce the size of the crews on the vessels. Each steam-propelled tug boat used to have a crew of seven. With the introduction of diesel engines, the crew was reduced to five. Now the companies were insisting on cutting it to three, saying that actually the captain alone was all that was needed to operate a tug. The result was a bitter strike. "I've been with the New York Central for 36 years," said deck hand John Creeter. "If we don't win this strike, I'm out on the street."³ The strikers picketed the port and central railroad station of New York. The teamsters, longshoremen and railroad workers supported them. Traffic on eleven railroads came to a standstill. Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York declared on January 20 that the consequences of the strike could prove to be critical.

Arthur Goldberg, who had just been appointed Secretary of

¹ *UE News*, October 10, 1962.

² *Ibid.*, November 7, 1960.

³ *Look*, April 25, 1961, p. 70.

Labor, went to New York personally to save the situation. Together with Governor Rockefeller he persuaded the railroad companies to postpone their contemplated layoffs for a year. On these conditions the strike was terminated on January 23. In a commentary on the strike, the *Look* magazine noted that "this seemingly minor labor dispute soon partially paralyzed one of the world's greatest cities. It also served as an ominous warning of the arrival of the Second Industrial Revolution". The main cause of strikes in the future, it predicted, would be fear of automation. "Not wages, but fear of being thrown out of work by machines, will cause future strikes."¹

The Department of Labor's tactic in this strike was used in other cases as well. Its main aim was to quash the dispute in each instance by postponing the settlement of acute issues concerning employment, and then, with the help of arbitration bodies, to push through the demands of the companies.

The manner in which a dispute on the railroads was handled was a good example of this. In late 1960, the railroad companies launched a campaign to discharge 80,000 employees who had become "redundant" because of automation. The resulting conflict threatened to develop into a nationwide railroad strike. A commission was appointed to look into the causes of the dispute. In February 1962, it reported its findings to President Kennedy and recommended that the companies be permitted to eliminate unneeded jobs. The unions took the matter to court. The US Supreme Court upheld the decision of the commission and acknowledged the right of the owners to alter working conditions at their discretion. The workers began to prepare for a strike, setting August 29, 1963 as the deadline. At that point the legislature came to the aid of the companies. Congress hastily passed a law—which the President immediately signed—banning the strike for 180 days and introducing compulsory arbitration.² Thus, the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government demonstrated their complete unanimity with the monopolies.

The administration created a National Council of Labor-

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 70.

² *Congressional Digest*, November 1963, p. 257.

Management Advisors, which included Meany, Reuther, McDonald and representatives of the monopolies and the public. Its function was to discuss certain aspects of labor relations and work out recommendations for the President on ways of averting strikes.

The contract between the UAW and General Motors expired on August 31, 1961. Negotiations for a new contract had begun two months prior to that date. Considering the militant mood of the delegates at the union's convention, Reuther could have demanded a reduction of the workweek. This alone would have created no less than 60,000 new jobs, while the elimination of overtime work, which the workers were also demanding, would have added another 24,000. But the union leadership sought a peaceful settlement to the prejudice of the workers' demands.

General Motors agreed to sign a contract containing only the general economic terms found in previous contracts. In particular, it provided for raising wages by 2.5 per cent in accordance with the growth of productivity, which was rising an average of 3.5 per cent, and extending the duration of supplementary unemployment benefits to 52 weeks. The company assumed the costs of a medical care plan for the workers and their families. The pension fund was increased, and the company would pay 50 per cent of the medical expenses of retired workers.

On August 6, the union leadership approved the three-year contract. All that was needed now was its endorsement by the union locals. However, the workers demanded more radical measures against the speedup system. A union conference unanimously registered a vigorous protest against all forms of speedup.

Some 15,000 complaints from workers about the bad working conditions and excessive workloads had piled up in the offices of the GM administration. But the new contract made no mention of these demands. This caused widespread dissatisfaction among the workers, and on September 11 union locals at the company's plants declared a work stoppage. Over 250,000 workers took part in the strike. The company refused to make any changes in working conditions. The strike threatened to become a drawn-out affair. At a hastily called



Printers on strike, New York

meeting of the union's executive committee, Reuther pushed through a resolution to terminate the strike. However, the leaders of the locals decided to continue it. Reuther faced an open revolt in the union. He demanded that all the recalcitrant local leaders come immediately to Detroit in order, with his personal participation, to settle relations with the company. Anyone who did not comply stood to lose his post. The strike was broken, and the workers returned to work on September 26.

The contract with General Motors served as a model for other automobile companies. The Ford workers, however, refused to recognize it. On October 3, work stopped at 85 Ford plants in a strike involving 120,000 workers demanding better working conditions. The fact that the GM strike had been frustrated weakened the position of the striking Ford workers. As a result, they managed to win only partial concessions.

The strike in the automobile industry put the Kennedy administration on the alert. At the same time, a serious dispute was brewing in the steel industry, where the collective bargaining contract was due to expire in June 1962. In January, the President invited representatives of United States Steel and the steelworkers' union to the White House, where he urged them to begin negotiations immediately, setting these conditions: the union should limit its demands for higher wages, and the companies should not raise steel prices.

Negotiations began on February 14, but two weeks later they came to an impasse because, the union declared, there was no basis for agreement. But at the President's insistence, the negotiations were resumed.¹ McDonald yielded one position after another, forgetting as he did so the demand for a reduction of the workweek. For the sake of a peaceful settlement, the union refrained from demanding a wage boost. All that remained of the vast program with which McDonald had come to the negotiating table were provisions that placed no burden on the corporations. The new contract was signed on March 31, three months before the old contract expired.

The workers got somewhat higher supplementary unemployment benefits and longer vacations, depending on seniori-

¹ See *Steel Labor*, April 1962, p. 2.

ty. They were to be compensated for a short workweek on the basis of only 32 hours a week instead of the standard 40, which testified to only partial employment in the steel industry. After the contract—under which the steelworkers got no wage increase whatsoever—was signed, the corporations immediately announced a price increase for steel.

Among the other examples of the strike struggle during those years we shall discuss two large worker actions—one by longshoremen and the other by printers. On October 1, 1962, more than 70,000 East Coast longshoremen went out on strike, bringing business life in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico ports to a standstill. The struggle for jobs had become a vital matter for the dock workers as well. The automation of loading operations had reduced manpower needs. The shipowners were now demanding a reduction in the size of work crews from 20 to 16 men, and were contemplating to bring it down eventually to 3 or 4. A leaflet put out by the union said: "Automation is responsible for most strikes in every major industry, including newspaper and longshore, and also responsible for a sizeable share of the 5,500,000 unemployment throughout the country. Why are most workers, especially we longshoremen, afraid of automation? Isn't it supposed to bring benefits to society as a whole? As longshoremen, speaking from where we stand, our answer is: It Should, But It Hasn't!"¹

On the fourth day of the strike, the Taft-Hartley Act was invoked, forcing the men to return to work. This was the fifth time this law was used against the longshoremen. The 80-day "cooling off" period ended on December 23, whereupon the dock workers again struck. They were demanding a reduction of the workday from 8 to 6 hours in order to save jobs.

The shipowners bluntly turned down all the strikers' demands, all the while hoping that a new law banning strikes would be passed. But the Kennedy administration, reluctant to risk its prestige, refrained from extreme measures. To settle the dispute, the President appointed a three-member commission headed by Senator Wayne Morse (Oregon), who was popular among the unions. It made this recommendation: not to reduce the size of crews for two years, increase the dock

¹ *The Worker*, January 20, 1963.

workers' wages by 39 cents an hour, and increase the pension fund. The commission emphasized the need to accept these proposals, otherwise the question would be turned over to Congress for consideration. The union accepted them, and on January 25, 1963 the strike ended.

On December 7, 1962, publication of the major newspapers in New York ceased when 3,000 printers went on strike against *The New York Times*, *New York Journal-American*, *Daily News*, and *New York World Telegram and Sun*. The big press united against the strikers. In solidarity with Hearst and Scripps-Howard, five newspapers, including the *New York Herald Tribune* and the *New York Post*, declared a lockout, as a result of which 17,000 workers were rendered jobless.

The struggle intensified; the demands of the printers for a reduction of the workweek to 35 hours and for limits to automation were turned down. A representative of the newspaper trusts stated before a congressional committee that the daily newspapers alone spent more than \$100 million a year on modernizing printing equipment. The strike went on against a background of provocations and blackmail on the part of the newspaper publishers, who were trying to split the ranks of the strikers. Federal and state officials were also applying pressure. Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz (who replaced Goldberg after his appointment to the Supreme Court), Governor Rockefeller and Mayor Wagner of New York City decided to create an arbitration board in which representatives of the public would take part. Appointed to head the board was ex-judge Harold Medina, the man who had presided over the trial of eleven Communist Party leaders in Foley Square. The unions refused to have anything to do with a board so obviously rigged against them, so the arbitration undertaking fell through.

The newspaper magnates were unable to break the resistance of the strikers. With broad labor solidarity and help from other unions, the printers held out. New York was without newspapers for 114 days in what turned out to be the longest strike in the history of the printers' struggle. It ended on March 31, 1963 in a victory for the workers. They won a 35-hour workweek, an \$8.00 a week wage increase, and limitations on the use of automated devices.

Thus, in this period, technological progress brought in its wake unemployment and intensification of labor. The workers sought protection against unemployment and growing exploitation as well as an earlier retirement age, longer paid vacations, unemployment benefits and elimination of overtime work. And with increasing persistence they sought a reduction of the workweek with no loss in weekly take-home pay.

What were the results of the strike movement in the 1950s and first half of the 1960s?

Workers cannot, of course, break out of the vise of capitalist exploitation by means of strikes alone. Lenin frequently emphasized that "strikes are *one* of the ways in which the working class struggles for its emancipation, but they are not the only way; and if the workers do not turn their attention to other means of conducting the struggle, they will slow down the growth and the successes of the working class".¹ In the course of the strike movement in the United States, it was not very often that voices of protest against anti-labor legislation were raised. The Communist Party and progressive unions called for struggle with this evil, but the top leadership of the biggest unions pursued a policy of conciliation and compromise, as a result of which the working class was confronted with a whole system of anti-labor legislation.

The strike movement was unable to prevent the bourgeois state from effectively interfering in industrial labor relations in favor of the employers. Labor's political activity remained inadequate as the unions continued to wage a struggle mainly in the economic sphere. However, in this aspect, striking workers were unbending and did not relinquish their class positions. They stood up doggedly for their economic demands and scored successes, although the opportunism of the union leadership often cost them dearly.

Wages grew, but to a smaller extent than in preceding years. Thus, the average nominal wage in the period 1950-1954 went up by 23.2 per cent, in 1955-1959 by 16.5 per cent, and in 1960-1964 by 14.7 per cent.² Contributing to the decline in the

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 318.

² *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1962, p. 220; *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1964, p. 617.

rate of wage increases was a growth in the proportion of workers whose wages did not go up at all. Wages remained unchanged for 12 per cent of the organized workers in 1959, and for 27 per cent in 1962. Among unorganized workers, the figures were 41 per cent in 1960, and 47.1 per cent in 1962.¹ Table 7 gives a general picture of the changes in nominal wages for various categories of wage and salary workers. (1960-64).²:

Table 7

	Number Employed (thousands)	Weekly Wage in 1964 (dollars)	Wage Increase Since 1960 (%)
Construction	3,033	132.06	17.1
Mining	0,634	118.01	12.0
Transportation and Public Utilities	3,914	121.80	12.0
Manufacturing	17,036	102.97	14.7
Trade (Wholesale and Retail)	11,863	79.87	4.0
Services	8,304	48.64	5.7

Table 7 shows that the highest weekly wages were in construction, mining and transportation, where the increase over 1960 amounted to 17 and 12 per cent. The figures also indicate large wage differentiation. The lowest wages were in wholesale and retail trade and in the services field, where workers received from two-thirds to one-half the wage in industry and transportation, although they comprised 35.3 per cent of the total employed. Their percentage wage increase for the years indicated was also two to three times lower.

Nominal wages give only a relative picture of the working people's living conditions. The changes in real wages are shown in Table 8 (in 1957-1959 dollars)³:

¹ *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1964.

² *Employment and Earnings*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 1964, p. XIII; *Survey of Current Business*, May 1964, pp. S-14, S-15; *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1965, p. 1036.

³ *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1962, p. 230; *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1964, p. 617; August 1965, p. 1040.

Table 8

Year	Average Weekly Wage (dollars)	% Increase or De- crease over 1959
1959	78.23	—
1960	77.70	-0.7
1961	78.87	+0.9
1962	81.15	+3.8
1963	82.08	+4.7
1964	85.27	+9.0

Between 1959 and 1964, the industrial workers' real wages increased by \$7.04 a week, or by 9 per cent. As seen from Table 9, the workers were most successful in 1964, when the wage increase in that one year was greater than in all four preceding years. This reflected the fact that in 1964 there were more strikes; workers had taken advantage of the industrial upturn to fight for a higher wage level.

By 1961, the law providing for a \$1.00-an-hour minimum wage embraced 24 million of the '50 million wage earners employed in production. It did not extend to wage earners in the services, retail trade, agriculture, the merchant marine and some other categories. The \$1.25-an-hour-minimum-wage law went into effect from September 1961 in two phases: \$1.15 from September 1961, and \$1.25 from September 1963. Thus, the official minimum hourly wage was raised from 40 cents under the 1938 law to \$1.25 under the law of 1961, or from \$832 to \$2,600 a year. The threefold increase in the minimum wage and the increase in the number of workers to whom it applied—from 13 million in 1940-1941 to 24 million in 1961—were the consequence of twenty-three years of hard struggle by the militant forces of the working class. The 1961 law included about 3.6 million new workers, basically in retail trade. However, about 22 million of the lowest paid workers in the services field, agriculture and other areas were still not covered.

Unemployment remained a serious problem. The number of unemployed went up from 3.9 million in 1960 to 4.2 million in 1963, comprising 5.7 per cent of the nation's labor force.¹ In

¹ *Survey of Current Business*, April 1963, p. S-13.

mining the unemployment rate was 8.4 per cent, in construction 12, and in manufacturing 5.8 per cent.¹ Joblessness among youth was particularly high. Hardest hit by unemployment were Negro workers, who in that year made up 11 per cent of the labor force but 22 per cent of the unemployed.²

As we have seen earlier, the mass movement of unemployed reached its peak in strength and organization during the world economic crisis of the 1930s, when the strike struggle, on the contrary, declined. In other periods, the unemployed movement was incomparably weaker and less effective. Finding himself jobless, the worker lost his ties with the union, while the latter continued to devote most of its attention to the struggle of employed workers. Because of the continuing industrial upswing in the postwar period, an unemployed person could eventually find a job, and when he did, he lost interest in the unemployed movement. For this reason the unemployed movement was naturally sporadic and spontaneous. With respect to helping the unemployed, the unions limited themselves primarily to conducting national unemployed conferences, introducing bills on unemployment benefits in Congress, and publishing educational materials in the labor press.

The 1935 social security law had inaugurated a system of government social insurance which was to figure as an important factor in the life of the unemployed ever since. The monopolies and reactionary members of Congress repeatedly raised the question of cancelling or reducing the scale of assistance, seeking to put the whole burden of expenses for social insurance on the workers themselves. Although these attempts created serious obstacles to the development of social security in the country, they could not abolish it, and the working class, through its many years of struggle, achieved substantial results in this area as well.

In March 1961, Congress adopted another temporary federal program of additional benefits to the unemployed. It provided for the payment of extended benefits to individuals who exhausted their regular benefits during the current

¹ *Survey of Current Business*, April 1963, p. S-13.

² *Monthly Labor Review*, March 1963, p. 252.

recession period. In February 1961, more than 600,000 unemployed had already exhausted their regular benefits, and another 3.4 million were close to it. The President's economic advisors and the government regarded unemployment benefits above all as an anti-recession measure.

However, the administration's efforts to get a law passed that would establish a federal minimum for benefits paid, as Kennedy had promised during the election campaign, or at least to extend for another year the temporary additional unemployment benefits, were fruitless. The 87th Congress finished its work without passing a bill to extend the temporary program to 1962-1963.

Congress did, however, pass a law providing for assistance to economically depressed areas that had lost industry and where chronic unemployment had developed. Employers were promised certain advantages if they invested capital in these areas. But the corporations were least of all interested in this. Citing the high wages established by the unions as their reason, they relocated their enterprises and capital from the old industrial centers to areas, primarily in the southern states, where they could find cheap and unorganized labor. Spokesmen for the monopolies maintained that the only thing that could stop or slow this process was reduction of wages. During the debate on the bill for assistance to depressed areas, Reuther remarked that some people were beginning to wonder, "Isn't there something basically wrong with an economic system that can't provide employment opportunities for millions of its citizens?"¹

Chronic unemployment was only one of the factors exerting pressure on the living conditions of American working people. Another factor had to do with the weakening of US positions in international trade. The West European countries in the European Economic Community and Japan had become formidable competitors of the United States. This was the result of intensified modernization of production in those countries and the existence of cheaper labor there than in the United States. Citing these facts, the American monopolies applied greater pressure on labor, demanding at least a wage

¹ *Congressional Digest*, April 1961, p. 126.

freeze. At the same time, in their pursuit of cheap labor, they increased the export of capital from the United States. These moves by big capital drew sharp criticism from labor leaders.

As we have seen, whatever improvements in the economic status of American workers there may have been, they came only as a result of tense struggle. Were it not for this struggle, the living standards of the great mass of workers would have been kept at rock bottom. Even so, the individual worker is still never free of this danger. Lack of necessary skills, loss of work, a long illness, racial discrimination and many other factors operate to lower the standard of living of a significant proportion of the working class.

The Negro working people, subjected to the greatest exploitation, are in a particularly difficult situation.

The united forces of reaction dealt a heavy blow to bourgeois-democratic freedoms after World War II. The already curtailed rights of the Negro population of the United States were subjected to further restrictions, especially in the southern states. The racists of the South had not departed very far from their slaveowning ancestors in their attitude toward the Negro people. They still tried to hold the Black American in a state of fear and obedience before the white master with bullets and bombs. However, this was no longer that emotional racism that used to throw the white racist into a frenzy at just the sight of black skin. Along with the radical changes in the social structure of the Negro people there also occurred a change in the social and political basis of racial discrimination.

In the 1960s, Negroes made up about eleven per cent of the total population of the United States, but they comprised a considerably higher proportion of the working class. For example, they made up 25 per cent of the unskilled laborers in industry. The chief exploiter of cheap Negro labor was the factory or mine owner. He reaped the fruits of discrimination, deriving big profits from it. The interests of the monopolies and the racists were closely intertwined; racism became an important instrument of monopoly capital.

The proletarianization of the American Negroes also had an impact on their struggle for civil rights. That struggle assumed a more definite class character; it was "a specialized part of the

general struggle of the working class against deprivation and class exploitation and oppression".¹

A clear account of the American Negro's abridged economic and political rights may be found in works by the American progressive historian Herbert Aptheker. "In this connection," he writes, "it is important to observe that while capitalist prosperity has improved to a degree the absolute living conditions of large numbers of Negro people, the latest government figures still place the average annual income of Negro families at \$2,711, which is about half the figure required for a 'minimum standard of decency'."² Discrimination against Negroes in hiring continued to flourish. Negro unemployment was double white unemployment. As concerns the earnings of Negro workers, while the average income of Negro families in 1950 was 54 per cent of that of white families, by the end of the 1950s it barely reached 51 per cent.³

The 1960s saw a massive upsurge in the Negro movement against discrimination and jimcrowism. "Invariably," Aptheker notes, "these high points of struggle evoked expressions of alarm and puzzlement, and regret that the 'Old Time Negro'—concocted in the master's dreams—had disappeared."⁴

In February 1960, Negro students in North Carolina launched a movement for equal service in restaurants, cafeterias and snack-bars. Conducted in the form of sit-ins, it soon spread to most of the cities in the South. Local state officials took repressive measures against the participants. Expressing the sentiments of the Negro people, the leaders of the movement declared that if necessary, Negroes would "turn the jails into bastions of freedom".

The sit-ins became organized actions. In April 1960, two hundred delegates from 53 colleges met in Raleigh, North Carolina, and decided to set up a coordinating center for the Negro student movement. The conference called for more effective forms of protest, such as a mass boycott of all retail establishments in which segregation existed. This boycott, the

¹ *Political Affairs*, November 1963, p. 19.

² Herbert Aptheker, *The Negro Today*, New York, 1962, p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

business press noted, "has frightening ramifications.... It has now become an economic situation affecting the entire community, the whole city, and the whole country."¹ Negro youth were supported by the National Student Association that organized meetings, demonstrations and picket lines in front of stores in New York, Cleveland and many other cities. The Negroes achieved some results through the sit-ins and the boycott. In a number of cities in the South owners of shops and lunch counters, fearing bankruptcy, abandoned discrimination.

May 1961 saw a new wave of the Negro anti-discrimination movement. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), a student organization, launched what came to be called "Freedom Rides" of Negroes and whites together on buses in the southern states. In Alabama, the Freedom Riders were subjected to brutality and mass arrests.²

A number of trade unions supported the Freedom Rides. A conference of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen condemned the reprisals against the Negro people in Alabama.³ The AFL-CIO leadership declared the acts of violence against Negroes unlawful and immoral. However, this was merely moral support, and only in particular cases, and therefore rather insignificant. The reason for this was that the unions themselves were infected with sentiments of white chauvinism, and some of them openly pursued a policy of discrimination.

In May 1960, at the initiative of Negro trade unions 800 delegates from 18 states gathered in convention in Detroit to found a Negro labor organization called the Negro American Labor Council. A. Philip Randolph was elected its president. The purpose of the new organization, he said, was not to create a "black federation of labor" but to bring down racial barriers. In 1961, two national conferences were held in which Negro organizations took part. One, held in Washington in February, was attended by more than 700 union representatives. The conference adopted a program of struggle against discrimina-

¹ *Business Week*, April 23, 1960, p. 31.

² *The Crisis*, June-July 1961, p. 325.

³ *The Worker*, May 28, 1961.



A Black and white demonstration against discrimination

tion in the labor movement, in industry and in government institutions.¹ The conference in June considered the question of struggle against unemployment. Its participants emphasized that automation worsened the plight of Negro workers.

The AFL-CIO leadership's policy on the Negro question was severely criticized. Randolph called for a discussion of the situation in the AFL-CIO executive council. "There is a crisis of confidence between the leaders of Negroes and labor," he wrote. "Since the Negro community and the labor community have common interests and common enemies, and should have common objectives, this crisis of confidence between these basic communities constitutes a grave danger to the cause of the Negro and labor."²

In 1963, the struggle of the Negro people was particularly sharp in Birmingham, Alabama, which for a long time had been considered an impregnable citadel of racism, a kingdom

¹ *Ibid.*, April 30, 1961.

² *Ibid.*, July 2, 1961.

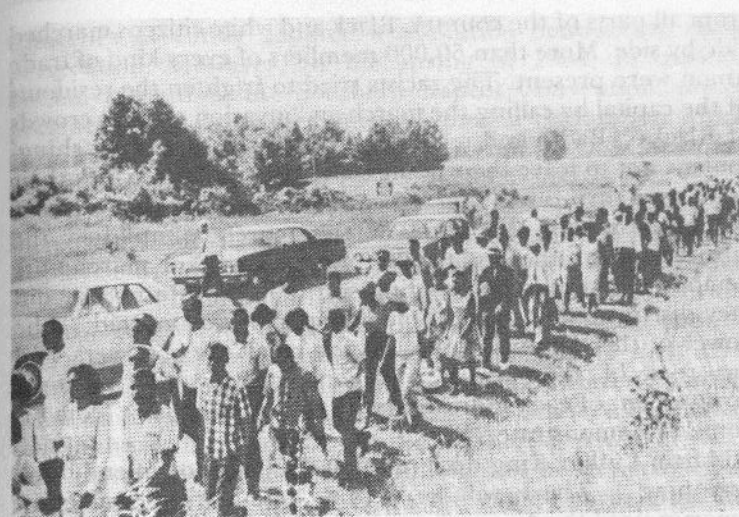
of fear and terror. In May 1963, the city was rocked by mass civil rights demonstrations in which over 40,000 people took part. The city's entire Negro population (about 90,000) boycotted stores owned by racists. The peaceful demonstrators were attacked and beaten, and hundreds were arrested by policemen who used fire hoses and police dogs against them.

The Birmingham events evoked a huge wave of protest. Members of the academic community and students became increasingly involved in the struggle against racism, which trampled underfoot every concept of democracy, threatening Black and white Americans alike. On June 23, about 100,000 people, both Black and white and including representatives of many unions, demonstrated in the streets of Detroit. Elsewhere, 10,000 persons took part in a demonstration in Boston, 15,000 in Cleveland, 11,000 in New York, 70,000 in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and 50,000 in Chicago. This massiveness imparted new qualities to the civil rights movement which the American press was inclined to assess as a "Negro revolution".

The Kennedy administration made some moves against discrimination. In February 1963, it urged Congress to pass a more effective right-to-vote law and to deny federal aid to non-integrated schools. But it skirted such vital questions for Negroes as the equal right to work, opportunity to acquire skills, and equal pay for equal work. The half-measures did not satisfy the Negroes. The leaders of the Negro movement accused the federal government of being passive in the matter of eliminating discrimination and of failing to protect the Negro population from racist terror. "The United States Government," one of them said, "which can regulate the contents of a pill, apparently is powerless to prevent the physical abuse of citizens within its borders."¹

The Birmingham events and the approaching presidential election compelled the Kennedy administration to define its position on the Negro question. On June 12, the President, in a radio and television address to the nation, painted a realistic picture of how the American Negroes were being deprived of their civil and political rights. "We face ... a moral crisis as a

¹ *Political Affairs*, October 1963, p. 29.



Black march on Washington "For Jobs and Freedom"

country and a people," the President said. "It cannot be met by repressive police action. It cannot be left to increased demonstrations in the streets. It cannot be quieted by token moves or talk. It is a time to act in the Congress, in your state and local legislative body, and above all, in all our daily lives. Those who do nothing are inviting shame, as well as violence."¹ A few hours after Kennedy's address, Medgar Evers, a prominent Negro leader, was murdered in Jackson, Mississippi.

In July, Kennedy sent a message to Congress urging that it pass a civil rights bill in 1963. He said that if Congress did not guarantee the civil rights of Negroes, they could not be expected to slacken the struggle. On the contrary, he foresaw an intensification and further aggravation of that struggle.

The growth of the Negro people's awareness was manifested, in particular, in a mass march on Washington on August 28, 1963. Thousands of people streamed to the capital

¹ *The Worker*, June 16, 1963.

from all parts of the country. Black and white citizens marched side by side. More than 50,000 members of every kind of trade union were present. The racists tried to frighten the residents of the capital by calling the march an "invasion of huge crowds of Blacks". Radio and television broadcasts warned Washingtonians not to leave their homes, and urged them to lock their doors and turn the capital into a ghost town. But the excellent organization and discipline of the marchers nullified the fabrications of the rightists. It was a peaceful march; the demonstrators marched singing spirituals, and in no way did they disrupt public order. One newspaper account said: "The power of this demonstration was felt by all the observers, and the root of this power was conspicuously the personal involvement of each individual who had traveled here from his home to demonstrate."¹

Martin Luther King declared that "1963 is not an end but a beginning.... There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwind of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until this bright day of justice emerges."² Subsequent years confirmed the truth of these words. Soviet historian Timur Timofeyev noted, "The actions of the Negro masses between 1964 and 1966 in New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities were not merely 'race riots' as the bourgeois press tried to portray them. They were more like social explosions."³ The philosophy of passive resistance increasingly came into conflict with reality. Prayers did not save the Negroes from clubs, whips and bullets. They were subjected to racist terror even in churches. On September 22, 1963, racists in Birmingham blew up a Baptist church during a service. Four Negro girls were killed and many others in the congregation were seriously wounded.⁴

Condemnations of racism and the jimcrow policies pursued by state governments were voiced by a number of church organisations. In December 1963, the National Council of

¹ *New York Herald Tribune*, August 29, 1963.

² *Political Affairs*, October 1963, p. 25.

³ Т. Тимофеев, *Пролетариат против монополий*, Moscow, 1967, p. 315.

⁴ *The Crisis*, November 1963, p. 553.

Churches of Christ adopted a resolution denouncing racist persecution. However, in the spring of 1964, in contrast to that resolution, the Southern Baptist Convention, under pressure from racist elements, adopted a declaration which said that the question of granting civil rights to Blacks should be handled individually in each particular case.

The position taken by the labor leaders was subjected to increasing criticism in the Negro movement. The tendency displayed by Meany and his associates to stand aloof, their passiveness in the matter of abolishing discrimination in the unions, generated Negro bitterness, discontent and protest. Negro workers persistently sought support from their class brothers, but they frequently encountered indifference, and in some unions out-and-out ill will. It is a commonly known fact that in the industrial centers of the South, Negro workers were only marginally organized into unions and hence were left to the mercy of the employers. We mentioned earlier that the hopes that the AFL-CIO would carry out its many promises to launch an organizing drive in the South were never justified. The labor leaders readily went to fancy resorts in Florida and organized AFL-CIO conventions and meetings of the executive council there, but never ventured to go to turbulent Birmingham.

The AFL-CIO leaders cannot be accused of ignoring the Negro question at conventions of the federation. No few resolutions were also passed at conventions of the various affiliated unions. However, all of them were remarkably alike, and their stereotyped rhetoric could serve only as a justification for the inactivity of the union leaders. It was no accident that there was mounting criticism of the position of the federation's leadership by Negro organizations both within and outside the AFL-CIO. At the fifth AFL-CIO convention, which opened on November 14, 1963 in New York, accusations were levelled at the labor leadership. At previous conventions it had vigorously blocked attempts by the Negro member of the executive council, A. Philip Randolph, to initiate debate on the Negro question; this time it could do nothing to stop it. Debate on five draft civil rights resolutions took up an entire day of the convention.

Randolph spoke of the economic plight of Negroes, about

the tactics of their struggle, and their attitude to labor unions. He stressed that Negroes were going through a serious economic crisis. They could see that social and economic progress was not improving their lot. Automation was sharply reducing the need for unskilled workers, the category made up largely of Negroes.

He drew attention to the fact that many white Americans were frightened by the militant spirit of the Negro movement. But this, he said, should not worry the unions; Negroes owed a lot to the American labor movement and were learning how to struggle from examples drawn from its history. Negroes used the sit-down strike tactic of the 1930s in their mass sit-ins protesting oppression and deprivation of rights.

For the first time at any AFL-CIO convention, the leadership decided to give the delegates an account of what it was doing to combat discrimination in the unions. The report was presented by secretary-treasurer Schnitzler. He announced that segregation no longer existed in 111 of the 130 unions in the federation. However, discrimination was still practised in 172 locals of 19 international unions. He noted that until recently only whites could belong to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen. In July 1963, a convention of that union removed the restrictive clause from its constitution, but so far no Negroes had been taken in.

But all this did not eliminate the passiveness and sluggishness of the union leaders in the struggle for civil rights. Cleveland Robinson of the wholesale and retail workers union questioned even the modest advances in the fight against discrimination of which Schnitzler had spoken. He said that solemn promises by unions to abolish inequality between Negroes and white workers meant nothing, for they were covered by a mask of hypocrisy, and unless this mask was torn off everything would stay as it was. Robinson levelled sharp criticism at the labor leadership. The Negro community, he said, had always supported the labor movement; the unions, however, were betraying the Negro workers. In the Negro civil rights march on Washington, the workers' columns were headed by clergymen and many figures from civil rights organizations. But where, asked Robinson, were the AFL-CIO officers?

Leo Smith of the International Union of Electrical Workers said that Negroes were fed up with the inactivity and indecisiveness of the union leaders. They needed jobs and freedom, he said, and they needed them now.

Meany was compelled to admit, however cautiously, that it was only in the summer of 1963 that the federation had begun to show somewhat greater activity than in the past.

The indignation that the Negroes cast upon the stagnant waters of the trade union bureaucracy was in itself a definite change for the better. At this large trade union forum they exposed the sanctimoniousness and hypocrisy of the top union officialdom. But the cumbersome machinery of the federation went its usual way. All the sharp edges in the resolution on civil rights were carefully filed down. Not a word about the privations of the Negro people, about their lack of rights and merciless exploitation, not a word about the brutal racist terror, no one condemned, no one offended. The resolution said that equal job opportunities did not exist not only because of discrimination on the part of many employers and some trade unions, but also because the workers did not have enough education and training.

The composite resolution abounded in problems and calls for Congress and the administration to solve them. Two basic tasks stood before the labor unions: first, to abolish discrimination in their own ranks, and second, to cooperate with their neighbors in the leading communities in order to ensure the full right of citizenship for every American.

From the end of the 1950s, ultra-reactionary, profascist elements in the United States became markedly more active. They proclaimed Senator McCarthy their ideological mentor and a model to pattern on. The movement of the ultra-rightists made McCarthyism even more dangerous because it absorbed all the extreme reactionary trends.

American sources did not give an exact idea of how many ultra-right organizations there were. One, for example, said: "A score or more of Rightist groups are now vying with one another for supremacy."¹ Others named no less than one

¹ *The New York Times Magazine*, November 26, 1961, p. 132.

thousand organizations which regularly published and distributed large quantities of anti-communist literature. In any case, reports of the more active organizations, such as the John Birch Society and the Anti-Communist Christian Crusade, could often be found on the pages of the American press.

The John Birch Society¹ appeared on the scene in late 1958. Its founder was Robert Welch, owner of a big confectionary business in Boston, and former vice-president of the National Association of Manufacturers. The society was headed by a national council composed of 25 members, 16 of whom represented major corporations. Membership dues in the society were \$24 a year for men and \$12 for women. However, besides these funds, as noted at a convention of the International Union of Electrical Workers in 1962, 50 leading groups of ultra-rightists received no less than \$20 million a year from representatives of various monopolies.

Robert Welch did not tolerate even the semblance of democracy in his organization; he was an advocate of a rigid dictatorship. "The John Birch Society," he declared, "is to be a monolithic body. Democracy is merely a deceptive phrase, a weapon of demagoguery, and a perennial fraud."² Coming to the fore in 1961 as a leading figure among the Birchists was retired General Edwin Walker. As commander of the 24th Infantry Division in West Germany, Walker had engaged in energetic political activity. He had supplied the army with anti-communist literature put out by ultra-right organizations, and openly labelled Democratic and Republican party leaders, including Eisenhower, as traitors.³ In October 1962, the general demonstrated his military valor in the town of Oxford, Mississippi. Heading an unruly mob of racists armed with rocks, chains and incendiary bombs, he attacked soldiers and police guarding a lone Negro who had dared cross the threshold of the state university there.

Working in close cooperation with the Birchists in some western and southern states was a profascist organization

¹ John Birch was an American intelligence officer operating in China after World War II (see: Gene Grove, *Inside the John Birch Society*, New York, 1961).

² *The New York Times Magazine*, November 26, 1961, p. 131.

³ Mark Sherwin, *The Extremists*, New York, 1963, pp. 128-33.

called the Anti-Communist Christian Crusade. Supported by the Catholic Church, that organization engaged in vicious anti-communist propaganda and the distribution of fascist literature. Also associated with the Birchists was a paramilitary organization called the Minutemen,¹ which emerged in late 1961. Its leader, Robert DePugh, an active member of the John Birch Society, got his training in the Anti-Communist Christian Crusade organization. The Minutemen were well armed, and their units held regular military exercises in Texas, Nebraska, Pennsylvania and other states.

What political objectives did the American ultra-right pursue? They were partially stated in their own publications, such as Robert Welch's *The Blue Book*. To a larger extent, these aims were revealed in commentaries appearing in the American press. Some observers wrote about them with gratification, others with alarm. Continuing McCarthy's fabrications, the ultra-rightists saw a communist plot in everything; to them, it was ubiquitous, penetrating all American institutions and influencing every aspect of American life.

The revival of McCarthyism on an even broader base stemmed from a number of causes directly related to the weakening of American imperialism's foreign policy positions, the crisis of its cold war policy, and the growth of opposition to the imperialist course within the country. The upsurge of the Negro movement stirred the racists—to whom the ultra-right organizations gave their full support—to greater activity. The extremists created profascist leagues, societies, committees and crusades.

The extremism of the ultra-rightists in foreign policy questions and their uncompromising anti-labor and racist position brought forth an increasingly sharp rebuff from the leaders of the labor unions. At their conventions and conferences and in the labor press, many unions pointed to the growing danger that extreme reactionaries posed to the democratic movement. At a convention of the steelworkers' union, McDonald warned that if the monopolies succeeded in destroying the organized labor movement, as they would so

¹ In 1775, the first Americans to take up arms against British colonial rule were called minutemen.

much like to do, there would be only one choice—"the John Birch Society or a police state".¹

The UAW noted at its convention in 1962 that organizations of ultra-rightists were reviving McCarthyism in its most dangerous form. The ultra-rightists had their sympathizers in the armed forces, and influential people in big business liberally supplied them with funds. Therefore, the union felt, the right extremists posed a considerably greater threat to the nation than McCarthyism did in the past. Their aim was to suppress and smash the unions and destroy democracy. In a resolution on civil liberties, the union condemned the repressive actions against the Communist Party and deplored the anti-Communist laws.

At a convention of the International Union of Electrical Workers it was stressed that the upsurge in the activity of reactionary organizations created a new situation for the labor movement in America, and caused alarm among labor. The union saw a definite connection between intensified anti-labor policies and the participation of representatives of big business in the ultra-right movement. As pointed out in the executive committee report, 16 officials of major corporations, including six from General Electric, were active in the leadership of the John Birch Society alone.²

The serious danger that the ultra-rightists posed to the labor movement was also brought out at conventions of Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Ladies Garment Workers and other unions.

The AFL-CIO leaders were very cautious with respect to the ultra-rightists. More than anything they were afraid lest the Birchists label them Communist sympathizers. But at the same time they could not remain silent, because in many unions the question of the profascist danger was being raised with increasing urgency. In late April 1963, the AFL-CIO held a two-day conference in Los Angeles, where the leaders lashed out against "communism and the radical right". In his address, Meany asserted that the unions were threatened both from the

¹ *Minutes of the Proceedings, Eleventh Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America*, September 1962, p. 14.

² *10th Constitutional Convention IUE-AFL-CIO*, September 1962, p. 7.

right and the left, and sounded the alarm against the "twin evils". However, he considered communism to be "the most serious threat to this country".¹ Governor Pat Brown of California did not agree with this view. In his speech at the conference he said that while the left "faded to a whisper", up and down California "the voice of the far right sounds harsh and strident, and it is the right-wing radicals who dominate the extreme scene".²

However, a special pamphlet, which the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education distributed to the unions in May 1963, was even more specific: "A new and ominous challenge confronts American trade unions and threatens their security. Everywhere the forces of the right wing are churning distrust of free democratic institutions, unions among them.... No community escapes right-wing activity whether open or secret. Begin now in your community to establish a coordinating committee to combat the right wing."³

Repressive actions against the Communist Party were one of the consequences of the increased influence the ultra-rightists had on the government apparatus. On June 5, 1961, the Supreme Court ruled that the McCarran-Wood Act of 1950 was constitutional. Under the decision, the Communist Party was to register with the Department of Justice as an agent of a foreign power and to supply the Department of Justice with the names of its officers and members. In another decision, the Supreme Court ruled that it was "a federal crime to be an active and knowing member of a party advocating violent overthrow of the Government".⁴ The court adopted the decision by a majority of one vote, five to four. Justice Hugo Black, a co-author of the liberal Black-Connery Act of 1938 (the Fair Employment Practices Act), voted against requiring the Communist Party to register.

The Communist Party asked the Supreme Court to reconsider the case, but the request was denied. On October 9, 1961, the decision was reconfirmed. Shortly thereafter, the Com-

¹ *The Worker*, May 12, 1963.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *U.S. News & World Report*, June 19, 1961, p. 42.

munist Party published a statement which said: "The refusal by the Supreme Court to rehear argument on the anti-democratic McCarran Act will not halt the Communist Party in its continuing struggle to defend the Constitution and its Bill of Rights.... The Communist Party is confident that once the American people realize that there is not a single person in this nation who cannot be jailed under this act if he voices opposition to the war and anti-democratic policies of the reactionaries, they will rally to the struggle against this infamous act."¹

The Department of Justice set different deadlines for the party as a whole and its leaders to register. It was also announced that non-compliance with the registration order carried penalties of five years' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine. Nonetheless, the Communists refused to comply. Leading party figures were again subjected to persecution. Some state legislatures enacted laws banning Communist Party organizations and depriving them of the right to take part in elections.

On December 1, 1961, a Grand Jury in Washington indicted the party with violation of the McCarran Act for not registering as an agent of a foreign power. On March 15, 1962, this charge was made individually against Gus Hall and Benjamin Davis. They were arrested and then released on \$5,000 bail pending their trial. Each faced a possible sentence of 30 years' imprisonment and \$600,000 fine.

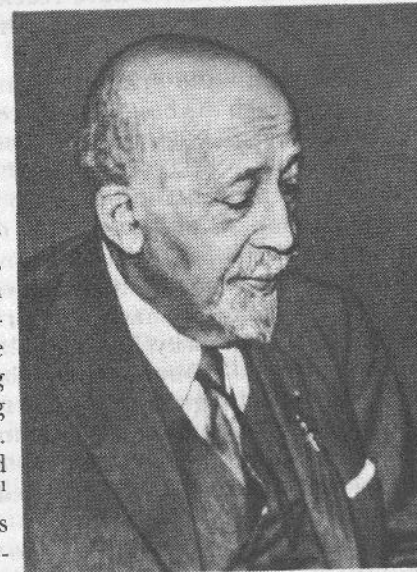
The repressive measures against the Communist Party drew protests from progressive organizations. A two-day conference in defense of democratic rights was held in New York on September 23 and 24, 1961, in which 155 public figures took part. On October 10, 1961, more than 300 professors, lawyers, doctors, journalists and people in the arts signed a letter to President Kennedy condemning the persecution of the Communist Party and saying that the Supreme Court decision paved the way for more repression and the suppression of any opposition. The National Association for Democratic Rights and the Citizens to Preserve American Freedoms Committee came out actively in defense of the Communist Party. However, only a few unions had the courage to openly

¹ *Political Affairs*, November 1961, pp. 1, 2.

condemn such reactionary laws as the McCarran Act. Among the few were the United Auto Workers and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

Student youth reacted differently. Showing increasing interest in progressive ideas, they wanted to hear about communism from the Communists themselves. Reactionary elements, however, violently opposed this idea. They picketed universities where Communist Party leaders were speaking, broke up lectures and engineered disturbances,

openly threatening the Communists with physical violence. Men from the Christian Crusade with threats and blackmail tried to keep Gus Hall from speaking at the universities of Wisconsin, California, Washington and Oregon. Hall recalled later, "There were many threats, including bomb threats. I was hung twice, in effigy, it is true. Once in Portland and once in Los Angeles."¹ Communist speakers were banned in some universities, but even so, vigorous actions by student organizations nullified the bans.



Dr. W.E.B. DuBois

Flinging a bold challenge to reaction, some figures in the arts, literature and science joined the ranks of the Communist Party. It will be recalled that not long before his death in 1945, the world-famous progressive writer Theodore Dreiser joined the party. This step was the logical result of his entire life and literary work. Equally as bright an example of ideological

¹ *Ibid.*, April 1962, p. 8.

conviction, humanism, courage and devotion to the cause of progress was the decision to join the Communist Party made in October 1961 by the renowned public figure and scholar, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois.

Just at a time when American reaction was hoping to put an end to the Communist Party Dr. Du Bois made this statement: "On this first day of October, 1961, I am applying for admission to membership in the Communist Party of the United States.... Today I have reached a firm conclusion:

"Capitalism cannot reform itself; it is doomed to self-destruction....

"Communism—the effort to give all men what they need and to ask of each the best they can contribute—this is the only way of human life.... In the end Communism will triumph. I want to help to bring that day."¹ In his reply, General Secretary of the Communist Party Gus Hall welcomed this courageous step: "You have chosen to join our Party precisely at the time when with brazen effrontery to the trends of the times, the most backward ultra-reactionary forces in our country's national life have temporarily dragooned the Supreme Court's majority into upholding the most flagrantly un-Constitutional thought-control laws—the McCarran Act and Smith Act, designed to muzzle free speech, ban freedom of association, persecute Communists and suppress our Party.... In joining the Communist Party, you have made that association which was clearly indicated by the very logic of your life.

"Dear Dr. Du Bois, welcome into the membership of our Party!"²

In those hard days of struggle, the party suffered two great losses. On February 2, 1961, Party Chairman Eugene Dennis died. A courageous fighter for the cause of the working class, he had held the post of General Secretary from 1948 to 1959. On September 1, 1961, honorary chairman of the CP USA William Foster, an outstanding figure in the international and American labor and Communist movements, died after a long illness.

¹ *Political Affairs*, December 1961, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was elected chairman of the Communist Party.

In its struggle against the Communist Party, American reaction relied quite a bit on revisionists and opportunists in the party, who usually stepped up their activity whenever the party was going through a difficult period and sought to shatter it from within. After the Supreme Court decision of June 1961, a group united around Milt Rosen began an open factional struggle to liquidate the party on the pretext that its disbandment would "weaken" the anti-Communist hysteria and "save" the liberals. In December 1961, this group was expelled from the party; the Communists expressed firm determination to preserve unity.

Under the guise of observing the standards of justice, the Department of Justice postponed the trial of the Communist Party several times. The authorities were clearly in no hurry, trying in the meantime to build up the anti-Communist campaign as much as possible in preparation for a broad offensive against progressive organizations. Besides Hall and Benjamin Davis, the Department of Justice had prepared indictments against another ten party members. The Subversive Activities Control Board, in turn, was demanding registration of such organizations as the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship. Among the other organizations was the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, which was declared to be an organization "infiltrated by Communists" and subject to prosecution under the McCarran-Wood Act.

On December 11, 1962, the district court in Washington fined the Communist Party \$120,000 for failing to register, thus applying only one of the punishments provided for by the McCarran Act. This enabled the party to continue its struggle for legal existence. On December 17, 1963, the Court of Appeals in Washington cancelled the fine as violative of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution. The decision noted that the Department of Justice could seek only voluntary registration. True, it still had the right to bring other actions against the Communist Party. On June 18, 1964, the Supreme Court also ruled that compulsory registration was unlawful. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn wrote that "the Communist Party won a

significant victory in the US Supreme Court on June 18th, in its fourteen-year-old battle against the McCarran Act".¹

The courts also struck down the provision of the anti-labor Landrum-Griffin Act prohibiting Communists from holding office in a labor union. In February 1962, Archie Brown, a Communist who had been elected to the executive committee of a local of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, was brought before a federal court. Under the Landrum-Griffin law the court sentenced him to six months' imprisonment. With the support of the union, Brown courageously stood up for his rights. In October 1963, a Court of Appeals agreed to review his case, and in June 1964 reversed the decision of the Federal Court as violating the Constitution. On June 22, 1964, the Supreme Court ruled that the clause in the McCarran-Wood Act forbidding the issuance of passports for travel abroad to Communist Party members was unconstitutional.

What was it that prompted these actions by the courts, which had earlier sent Communists to jail ignoring the Constitution and elementary standards of justice? The cause lay in the sentiments of the broad masses of Americans, including intellectuals, who felt serious anxiety for the fate of American democracy in the face of frenzied profascist reaction. The answer should also be sought in the maneuvers of the judiciary which, alternately increasing and weakening the repressive measures against the Communists, were making a show of democracy and at the same time exhausting the Communist Party with continual legal actions.

The Communist Party reacted sharply to all major events of US domestic and foreign affairs. Using what means of mass communication it had at its disposal, it exposed the aggressive actions of American imperialism, specifically the subversive actions against revolutionary Cuba, the military intervention in South Vietnam, and provocations in West Berlin.

After the failure in April 1961 of American plans with respect to Cuba, the ultra-rightists increased their pressure on the government, resorting to open incitement and blackmail. This made President Kennedy refer publicly to "those self-appointed generals and admirals who want to send

¹ *Political Affairs*, July 1964, p. 16.

someone else's sons to war and consistently voted against the instruments of peace". However, on October 22, 1962, the US government proclaimed a military blockade of Cuba and put the world on the brink of thermonuclear war. The right extremists were demanding that the United States immediately step over the brink.

In these circumstances, the Communist Party of the USA called for organized actions in defense of peace.¹ The progressive forces in America realized the danger of the US policy in the Caribbean. On October 27, more than 2,000 Americans picketed the White House with posters reading "Negotiations, Not Destruction" and "No to War Against Cuba". The peaceful settlement of the Cuban crisis threw the ultra-rightists into a frenzy. In Congress they demanded an investigation of the administration's actions and removal from the White House of those presidential advisors who persistently recommended a "soft" line with respect to communism.

Increasingly, Kennedy came to understand the need for a change in policy. In his famous speech at Washington University on June 9, 1963, the President called for a re-examination of the cold war policy. He said:

"Let us re-examine our attitude towards the cold war, remembering we are not engaged in a debate, seeking to pile up debating points. We are not here distributing blame or pointing the finger of judgment. We must deal with the world as it is, and not as it might have been had the history of the last eighteen years been different."²

The signing in 1963 by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union of the nuclear test ban treaty in Moscow testified to the possibilities of practical steps on the part of the Kennedy administration towards the relaxation of international tension. Active representatives of the ultra-rightists in Congress—such as Senator Barry Goldwater (Rep., Arizona), Democrats Richard Russell (Georgia), John Stennis and James Eastland (Mississippi), Harry Byrd (Virginia) and Strom Thurmond (North Carolina)—sought in vain to prevent ratification of the Moscow Treaty.

¹ *The Worker*, October 28, 1962.

² *Ibid.*, June 16, 1963.

Most of the labor unions came out in support of the Moscow Treaty. Many wrote to Congress urging its ratification. The Clothing Workers sent letters to every senator, saying: "The people of the world are grateful to the US, Britain and the Soviet Union for this test ban because it will, first of all, put an end to the contamination of the atmosphere by the radioactive fall-out."

"But what is even more important, in the long run, is that this represents the first affirmative step towards disarmament that our country and Russia have taken since the end of World War II signaled the start of Cold War I. And total disarmament is the most effective guarantee of peace."¹

The AFL-CIO leadership did not stand aloof. The executive council expressed approval of the Moscow Treaty, regarding it "as the first step towards the possible limitation or reduction of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction".² A message to the Senate said: "The AFL-CIO Executive Council strongly urges the US Senate to ratify the limited test-ban treaty agreed upon in the Anglo-American negotiations with the Soviet Union."³

The Senate ratified the treaty, which meant a heavy defeat for the reactionary coalition of Dixiecrats and Goldwater Republicans. The extreme racism of the southern Democrats, their association with profascist organizations and their complete unity with the ultra-rightist Republicans created a real threat of a split in the Democratic Party. The approaching 1964 presidential election prompted Kennedy to seek a compromise with the Dixiecrats in order to ensure voter support in the southern states.

The trip made with this aim to Dallas, Texas, one of the main centers of the American ultra-right, proved fatal to Kennedy. On the eve of his arrival there, an atmosphere of hostility to the President and his policies prevailed in the press of Texas and other southern states. There were also calls for terrorist acts.

On November 22, 1963, as he rode in a motorcade through

¹ *The Worker*, August 25, 1963.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

downtown Dallas on his way from the airport to the hotel where he was to deliver a speech, the President of the United States was shot and fatally wounded. Half an hour later he died in a local hospital. The anti-Communists could not miss the opportunity to use the President's tragic death for their own purposes. The John Birch Society published a lengthy statement in *The New York Times* on December 15, under the heading, "The Time Has Come", with a provocative call for Americans to begin a decisive drive against communism.¹

The profascist danger from the ultra-rightists stirred the unions to political activity. For all their anti-communism, the union leaders understood that they could not evade struggle against the ultra-rightists without risking ending up in the same camp with the open and irreconcilable enemies of labor. The extreme reactionary wing of the bourgeoisie was making a bid for power under the Republican Party banner. This forced the unions to turn to the Democrats and to enter the election struggle in a more organized way.

Vice-President Lyndon Johnson, who under the Constitution became President of the United States, promised to continue John F. Kennedy's course in domestic and foreign policies. A number of bills (on tax reduction, Negro civil rights, medical aid for the aged, and others) to which Kennedy had given strong support became part of the new administration's program. These bills differed in their economic and political significance. The administration regarded tax reduction as a radical anti-recession measure to stimulate the economy; it was assumed that it would encourage the monopolies to increase investment in new production, and enable consumers to buy more goods. Preference was given to corporations and people in the high income brackets, thus making it easier to get the bill through Congress.

On February 26, 1964, Johnson signed the bill providing for a tax reduction of \$11.5 billion. Reductions amounted to from 2 to 1.6 per cent on incomes ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000, and 16 per cent on incomes of \$200,000.² For low-paid workers, rising prices made a big dent in the small savings they

¹ See *The New York Times*, December 15, 1963.

² *The Worker*, March 15, 1964.

derived from the tax cut. Nonetheless, this concentrated (during 1964) ten-billion-dollar investment in the economy was expected to "have a significant impact on markets".¹

A stubborn struggle both within and outside Congress took place over the civil rights bill. For the Johnson administration, the immediate passage of this bill was important from the standpoint of the 1964 presidential election campaign and the drive to win the Negro vote. But that was not all, for the ruling circles were pursuing broader political objectives as well. They were alarmed about the ever growing scope of the Black movement and the support it was getting from the labor unions, the intellectuals and church organizations. To take the edge off the struggle by legislative action was a matter the Democratic administration felt could not be put off. The passage of the civil rights law was regarded as an unavoidable measure.

The Dixiecrats and the ultra-right wing of the Republicans did everything they could to kill the bill. They introduced more than a hundred amendments which would have reduced it to empty declarations. When these amendments were rejected and the House of Representatives passed the bill by a vote of 290 to 130,² the Dixiecrats in the Senate resorted to their tested obstructionist practices.

On June 19, the Senate passed the bill by a vote of 73 to 27, whereupon President Johnson signed it into law. The 1964 Civil Rights Act outlawed discrimination in voter registration and in public accommodations such as hotels, restaurants and bars, libraries, theaters, recreation parks, swimming pools and sports grounds. It made it unlawful for employers to discriminate against Blacks in employment opportunities and for unions to discriminate against them in admitting them to membership. The law authorized the national government to bring suits to desegregate public facilities and schools.

Black leaders, Martin Luther King among them, expressed their satisfaction with this law. However, the Black organizations did not have any illusions that the civil rights struggle

¹ *The Worker*, March 15, 1964.

² In the House of Representatives, 152 Democrats and 138 Republicans voted for the bill, and 98 Democrats voted against it.

could be slackened now that the law was passed. Bitter experience had taught them how long and arduous was the road from laws and declarations to their implementation in anything concerning Blacks in America. The leader of the NAACP, Roy Wilkins, said that Black demonstrations would continue and that the militancy of the Black movement would not weaken. Indeed, stark reality was soon to dampen the enthusiasm over the passage of the civil rights law. One week later, racists in Mississippi brutally killed three civil rights fighters.¹

The terror and violence in the South and the frankly racist stand of the ultra-rightists in the Republican Party (Barry Goldwater voted against the civil rights bill) left the Blacks no other alternative than to rely on the Democratic administration.

The attention of the Black and low-income white population was drawn to President Johnson's war-on-poverty program, which he outlined in a special message to Congress in March 1964. It proposed that \$962,500,000, or about one per cent of the federal budget, be allocated for the struggle against poverty, this against the background of \$62.6 billion, or more than 62 per cent, in military appropriations. This correlation itself showed that the administration was embarking with very meager supplies on a campaign against poverty. According to the President's official estimate, 20 per cent of all American families, or about 35,000,000 persons, were living in poverty.

However, progressive economists felt that it would be wrong to dismiss the whole program as social demagoguery.² By declaring war on poverty in their own interests, the powers-that-be willy-nilly opened the way to American working people for active struggle to improve their living conditions and for a real, and not a sham, war on poverty.

The Democrats widely publicized the measures taken by the

¹ The NAACP convention vainly appealed to President Johnson to use his full authority to protect the lives and liberties of the citizens of the state of Mississippi (*The Worker*, June 30, 1964).

² Hyman Lumer, "President Johnson's Economic Program", *Political Affairs*, March 1964, p. 12.

Johnson administration. They were counting on winning the labor and Negro vote, which in itself would give them a solid basis for victory. These calculations were reinforced after the extreme right wing took over the leadership of the Republican Party, and Barry Goldwater—a millionaire, retired general, racist and irreconcilable enemy of labor—became the Republican Party's candidate for President.

Goldwater's election platform, adopted by the Republican convention in San Francisco in June 1964, as well as the many statements he made during the campaign, left no doubt in the minds of most voters as to his aims and methods. Goldwater intended to step up the struggle against communism and pursue a policy of diktat and ultimatum with respect to the socialist countries. He promised to achieve victory in South Vietnam by any means, and to strike a blow to the Cuban revolution.

Goldwater considered the Democratic administration's exercises in reformism (in the sphere of unemployment relief, the fight against poverty, medical assistance to the aged, etc.) to be dangerous. He insisted on reducing the role of the federal government to a minimum, came out against government interference in the economy and against reforms, and demanded that employers be given complete freedom in handling economic problems and labor relations.

In the Negro question, the Republican candidate looked for support from racist elements among the white voters and among those blue- and white-collar workers who feared Negro competition on the job market.

The AFL-CIO sent both parties its proposals, primarily in the economic field.

The main point in the AFL-CIO program concerned jobs and unemployment. It noted that nine million persons had entered the labor market between 1953 and 1963, but only 6.6 million were able to find jobs, and only 3.1 million worked a full workweek. To increase employment, the unions proposed cutting the workweek from 40 to 35 hours with no reduction in weekly pay, reducing overtime work and setting a double time rate of pay for overtime. They also urged expanding public works and allocating larger sums of federal money for retraining workers to meet the requirements of automation.

The unions considered it necessary to reduce taxes on low incomes and to raise the minimum wage from \$1.25 to \$2.00 an hour. They also demanded an increase in unemployment benefits and extension of their duration, and the establishment through legislation binding on all states of a uniform minimum for unemployment benefits. The unions gave their approval to the civil rights law of 1964 and called for effective federal measures to implement it.

The AFL-CIO program also touched on foreign policy questions. Here, the labor bureaucracy continued to hold to its former positions of supporting anti-communism and aggression. It insisted on an all-out buildup of the nation's military strength, and came out against the desire of some business circles to expand economic relations with the socialist countries.

The Republican Party mostly ignored the demands of labor in domestic policy, but the Democratic Party used them extensively in its election platform. The extremism of the Republican candidate helped the Democrats, since the attention of the majority of voters was focussed mainly on the danger from the ultra-rightists.

Against this background, the position of the Democratic Party looked preferable, and its vague hints about pursuing a policy of peace and showing "flexibility" in relations with the socialist countries seemed reassuring. On the other hand, Johnson's promise to expand US commitments in Asia and other parts of the world fully met the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie. In any case, representatives of a number of major monopolies (Henry Ford, Jr., banker Thomas Lamont, industrialist Edgar Kaiser, and others) actively supported Johnson and set up a committee to back his election.

For their part, the nation's labor leaders stressed the importance and necessity of political activity, and called on the rank and file to take an active part in politics. A resolution adopted by a convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, for example, said that labor could and should play a decisive role in the political life of the country. A resolution of the steelworkers' convention implied that the very fate of the union was dependent upon the political situation, for the activity of the union and of the entire labor movement could be

paralyzed by the election to high office of people devoted to the monopolies.

The unions aimed their main blows in the election struggle against the extremists. And it was not only the major organizations of industrial workers who were active, but also smaller unions that ordinarily kept out of politics. The United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers, whose membership consisted mainly of women, noted the "extraordinary danger" of the extremists and called upon its members to give a vigorous rebuff to reaction. The Insurance Workers of America, which said that it usually tried to stay out of political campaigns, considered struggle against the extremists to be a vital necessity.

The unions did not overlook the mainspring of the ultra-right movement, the monopolies, who directed and lent strength to that movement. Publications put out by the Committee on Political Education (COPE) observed that the rightist elements enjoyed impressive support from big monopolies and banks. Their leaders, it was noted, were closely connected with the National Association of Manufacturers and the US Chamber of Commerce. Their chief aims were to undermine the effectiveness of labor unions, abolish the union shop, which the NAM described as "compulsory unionism", and to spread the anti-labor "right-to-work" laws throughout the country.

In 1961, the Chamber of Commerce had established a special committee for "free unionism" to stimulate the movement aimed at abolishing the union shop wherever it existed, which was tantamount to abolishing unions.

Goldwater took his place in this concentrated campaign against organized labor. He asserted that the growing power of the unions posed a mortal danger to the economy.

In the elections on November 3, 1964, the Republican Party was defeated. Its presidential candidate Goldwater carried only five southern states, and won a total of 27,176,873 votes (38.5 per cent). Democrat Lyndon Johnson received 43,128,958 votes, or 61 per cent.

The Democrats strengthened their position in Congress. They won 295 seats in the House of Representatives, to the Republicans' 140, and 68 in the Senate, to the Republicans' 32.



An anti-war youth demonstration, New York

But Goldwater's defeat did not mean the end of the ultra-right movement. The Communist press wrote: "The November 3rd election was only the first major battle with the ultra-Right, not the decisive nor final one."¹

Having received the support of 27,000,000 Americans, the extremists had no intention of giving up the struggle. However, the destiny of the Republican Party was a subject of great concern to the monopoly bourgeoisie. The Republicans had not faced such a profound crisis for a long time. The smashing defeat they suffered at the polls showed that the bourgeois parties could not expect success if they came out with a narrow class-biased and bluntly imperialist program.

The Democratic Party's overall position was stronger. The Democrats received 74 per cent of the votes in the major northern cities (as compared with 62 per cent in 1960), and 61 per cent in the industrial centers of the West (as compared with 52 per cent in 1960). The picture in the industrial regions of the South was different. There, the Democrats' positions proved to be weaker—they won only 47 per cent of the votes, showing no gain in strength over 1960.² They did win most of the Black vote, however.

Those monopoly bourgeoisie circles that placed their stakes on President Johnson took the Democratic victory as their own. They did not object to some social reforms to avoid an intensification of the class struggle, but at the same time opposed such major labor demands as reducing the workweek, raising the minimum wage and increasing unemployment benefits. They did not support Goldwater's extremist policies, but at the same time did not oppose the cold war and the arms race. They were perfectly satisfied with the "limited war" in Vietnam and US colonialist policies in Latin America.

On the whole, labor supported the bourgeois parties, thus remaining within the two-party system. But in fighting the ultra-right enemies of the working class, the unions became more active politically. As a result of increasingly sharp class conflicts, organized workers felt a growing urge toward independent political action.

¹ *Political Affairs*, December 1964, p. 2.

² *U.S. News & World Report*, November 16, 1964, p. 40.

CHAPTER XVI

ON THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE US LABOR MOVEMENT

Events in the United States during and after World War II made manifest the growing influence of the working class on the entire social and political life of the nation. This largely accounts for the heightened interest among bourgeois ideologists in problems relating to the class struggle.

The dominant trend in the American historiography of the labor movement is based on bourgeois ideology. An idealist approach in assessing major social phenomena will be seen in most works by bourgeois authors. Many writers seek to underscore the non-class nature of their research and the independence of the concepts they set forth. However, their common ideological foundation is obvious.

With the aim of justifying the dominance of the monopolies, bourgeois scholars evolve apologetic theories about the United States becoming an "affluent society", the "democratization of capital", or the onset of a revolution in distribution of incomes, all of which leads to a democratic "people's capitalism".

The books put out by many of these writers are permeated with the spirit of anti-communism and cold war. Their distinctive feature is their promotion of nationalism, the so-called spirit of Americanism, whose aim is to cultivate the belief in American superiority to other nations. Typically, such books idealize the American monopolies, praise the leaders of big business, and underrate the active role of the working people in American history. The same approach also manifests

itself in the appraisals of the role of labor leaders and the union masses.

In the postwar period, bourgeois historiography continued to conform to official philosophy and to follow a relativist approach in appraising historical events. This deviation from historical truth is one of the manifestations of the crisis of bourgeois ideology in general, and of reactionary historiography in particular. Lenin wrote that "to make relativism the basis of the theory of knowledge is inevitably to condemn oneself either to absolute scepticism, agnosticism and sophistry, or to subjectivism. Relativism as a basis of the theory of knowledge is not only recognition of the relativity of our knowledge, but also a denial of any objective measure or model existing independently of mankind to which our relative knowledge approximates."¹ Of course, materialist dialectics "does contain relativism, but is not reducible to relativism, that is, it recognises the relativity of all our knowledge, not in the sense of denying objective truth, but in the sense that the limits of approximation of our knowledge to this truth are historically conditional."² Recent decades have given ample confirmation of the correctness of Lenin's criticism of idealism and relativism in bourgeois philosophy and historiography. This has been made clear in a number of works by Soviet authors.³

American bourgeois historians also interpret various processes within the American labor movement from idealist positions. Here, too, the basic ideological principles and general approach have remained unchanged.

The relativist thinking of bourgeois scholars has influenced their entire approach toward the study of the past. It is this methodological point of departure that causes the crisis of bourgeois ideology in general and historiography in particular. This manifests itself in the denial of the law-governed nature of social development and of the possibility of cognizing the

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 137.

² *Ibid.*

³ See *История философии*, т. V, Moscow, 1961, pp. 709-43; И. С. Кон, «Философский релятивизм в современной американской буржуазной историографии», *Новая и новейшая история*, No. 5, 1958, pp. 125-37; *Современная буржуазная идеология в США*, Moscow, 1967.

historical process as a whole. The interpretation of events and facts largely depends on the subjective views of the writer himself. Using this method of research, many writers regard history as an art.

Some participants in the 13th International Congress of Historical Sciences held in Moscow in 1970 expressed the idea that the historian is an active factor in history, that he makes history just as much, if not more, than historical figures themselves. It was thereby stressed that the historian's subjectivism and his personal arbitrary interpretation of facts set history further and further apart from all other "new social sciences", as a consequence of which it lags behind them. This happens, they say, because history does not operate with scientific categories.¹

This approach to history is due to a certain extent to an underestimation of theory and a disregard of the need to analyze qualitative changes and to identify both the common character and the specific features of events.

The contemporary historiography of the American labor movement has been strongly influenced by pragmatism, an idealist trend in bourgeois philosophy. The distinctive feature of pragmatism is that it identifies truth with practical utility, with whatever is useful—from the standpoint of the bourgeois class, of course. Truth is whatever is good for the monopolies. Charles Wilson, former president of General Motors, once said: "What's good for General Motors is good for the country."²

The pragmatists do not recognize the existence of objective truth; they believe that there are as many truths as there are points of view. For the pragmatist, the social and historical role of the diverse practical activity of mankind as the basis of the criterion of truth is replaced by the personal successful activity of the individual. In the latter activity the sense of satisfaction is regarded not only as the basic evidence of practical success but also as the criterion of truth.

Pragmatism has had an influence on various branches of

¹ XIII Международный конгресс исторических наук (Proceedings of the Congress), Moscow, 1970, pp. 6-8.

² *CIO, 1935-1955*, p. 82.

knowledge. "Pragmatism's great value to the capitalists," writes William Z. Foster, "is that it robs the working class of a theory of society. It undertakes to substitute an idealist, rule-of-thumb practice for a scientific Marxian analysis of the laws of development. This cynical philosophy permeates not only capitalist ranks, but also the ranks of the bosses' labor lieutenants."¹

"Union leaders," say American economists Daugherty and Parrish, "are pragmatists and opportunists, focussing on what they hope will be the best short-run solutions to immediate problems. Continuous, relatively small advances instead of huge spectacular gains is the usual program."²

The trend in the American labor movement known as "business unionism" is also directly related to the philosophy of pragmatism. The typical features of "business unionism" are (a) its denial that the working class has any need for a proletarian ideology, political struggle or a party of its own, and (b) its extolling of private enterprise, individualism and attainment of personal success. The "community of interests" between labor and capital, "peaceful cooperation" between workers and employers, and mutual concessions and agreements are proclaimed to be the cornerstone of labor relations.

The most vulgar manifestation of pragmatism in the labor movement was found in so-called "union capitalism", when union leaders engaged in petty speculation, bought up stocks, and systematically took bribes and committed other abuses in securing employment for workers. Corrupt labor leaders such as Dave Beck and Joseph Ryan turned their jobs into a racket.

As already mentioned, a characteristic feature of American bourgeois historiography is the tendency for most historians to stress their allegedly non-class and non-partisan positions in appraising the American labor movement. As far back as the beginning of this century Lenin revealed the class nature of such intentions. "That science is non-partisan in the struggle of materialism against idealism and religion is a favourite idea not only of Mach but of all modern bourgeois professors, who are,

¹ William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, p. 317.

² Carroll R. Daugherty and John B. Parrish, *The Labor Problems of American Society*, Boston, New York, 1952, p. 329.

as Dietzgen justly expresses it, 'graduated flunkies who stupefy the people by a twisted idealism'."¹

This idealism permeates the works of many contemporary American historians and economists. They claim to be impartial, but in fact they pursue a bourgeois line in their treatment of the fundamental problems of the American labor movement. In his introduction to a collection of essays by prominent bourgeois ideologist Sumner H. Slichter, Professor John T. Dunlop asserts that Slichter "was nobody's man and he belonged to no group or school."² But Slichter himself reveals his class position when he says: "Today the process of exploitation in capitalist America is diametrically opposite to the process described by Karl Marx. Marx thought that capital exploited labor, but in America today, labor exploits capital."³

One has to read only a few of Slichter's works to realize that his "impartiality" was in fact the usual apologia for the existing social system.

The theory that technological progress has transformed American capitalist society into a "general welfare society" is supported by many American economists, Kuznets, Galbraith, Berle, Jr., and Lilienthal, to name a few.⁴ All depict America as an "affluent society".

The share of the national income going to the richest five per cent of the American population, writes Kuznets, has been falling since World War II.⁵ Contemporary capitalism, assents Galbraith, is far from the social antagonisms that were typical of it in the past; today, incomes are redistributed in favor of the working people, as a result of which the condition of the rich is radically altered and their power is increasingly restricted by

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 139.

² Sumner H. Slichter, *Potentials of the American Economy*. Selected Essays, ed. by John T. Dunlop. Cambridge, Mass., 1961, p. XXII.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. XXI-XXII.

⁴ A. A. Berle, *Saving American Capitalism*, New York, 1950; Simon Kuznets, *Shares of Upper Income Groups in Income and Savings*, New York, 1953; David E. Lilienthal, *Big Business: A New Era*, New York, 1953; John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, New York, Toronto, 1958.

⁵ Simon Kuznets, *Op. cit.*, pp. XXXVI, XXXVII, 668.

the growing influence of the government and the labor unions.¹

This theory of American capitalism's "transformation" is embraced by other American economists and historians. Sufrin and Sedgwick,² Link,³ Garraty,⁴ and Lindblom, for example, trailing Kuznets, also refer to a metamorphosis of American capitalist society, which, they say, has brought about a levelling of classes. Link believes that "the years from 1945 to 1954 were a time of unparalleled material prosperity for the mass of the American people". As Link exclaims, "in the period after 1939 the seemingly inexorable tide of concentration of incomes in the fewer and fewer hands was at last reversed".⁵

Historian John Garraty, an adherent of the same apologetic theory, asserts in his thick book on American history that in America the poor are becoming richer, while rich people's incomes represent a declining proportion of the national income.⁶ This historian is echoed by Hyman Bookbinder, Assistant Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, who on December 29, 1966 sought to cheer up Black Americans. "The poor," he said, "can stop being poor if the rich are willing to become even richer at a slower rate."⁷ But in fact the entire history of American capitalism shows that the rich want to become richer at a faster, not a slower, rate. The apologists for the bourgeoisie make use of the propaganda myth about "prosperous" workers. Accordingly, Garraty uses no other word than "prosperity" to describe the condition of the American working class during World War II.⁸ In an effort to corroborate this theory, he says that the war had no negative

¹ John Kenneth Galbraith, *Op. cit.*

² S. C. Sufrin and R. C. Sedgwick, *Labor Economics and Problems at Mid-Century*, New York, 1956.

³ Arthur Link, *American Epoch. A History of the United States Since the 1890s*, New York, 1955.

⁴ John A. Garraty, *The History of the United States*, London, 1968.

⁵ Arthur Link, *Op. cit.*, pp. 582, 586.

⁶ John A. Garraty, *Op. cit.*

⁷ Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*, New York, Evanston and London, 1967, p. 6.

⁸ John A. Garraty, *Op. cit.*

effect on the living standard of the average American. American historian Frank Freidel said in a speech at the 13th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Moscow in August 1970: "As a side effect of the war, the Federal government was lessening the disparity between the incomes of the very rich and those of modest means. For the first time American abundance became available to very large numbers of people."¹

That the incomes and living standards of workers rose during the war cannot be denied. But one cannot take seriously the attempts made by these writers to represent this as prosperity. In the first place, they say nothing about what the condition of the workers was in the thirties. In the second place, they do not write about the fact that the growth of weekly earnings was largely due to more hours worked per week. Moreover, they say nothing about the great mass of low-paid workers, and prudently avoid mentioning the intense strike struggle in defense of collective bargaining contract provisions constantly violated by the monopolies.

In this light, the assertions by Dallas M. Young that workers and capitalists have common interests look rather strange. He cites what in his opinion is the best definition of labor, given by Ralph H. Blodgett: "Labor is human effort which is expended for the purpose of acquiring income."² This simplified interpretation would permit one to maintain that the capitalist is also a man of labor. And indeed, Young writes further on that difference between the millionaire and the worker is, in a sense, relative, because the former may be both a laborer and a capitalist.³ And this means that they are always merely "partners in production."

Something similar is evolved by Thurman Andrew, an exponent of the theory of "people's capitalism", who maintains

¹ Frank Freidel, "The Role of the State in United States Economic Life", *13th International Congress of Historical Sciences*, Moscow, August 16-23, 1970, p. 6.

² Dallas M. Young, *Understanding Labor Problems*, New York-Toronto-London, 1959, p. 10.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

that every worker can become a capitalist and every capitalist a worker.¹

Such then is the general idea of the widely current theory of the transformation of capitalism into an "affluent society" through the levelling of incomes.

A fairly complete picture of what the "affluent society" and "income revolution" are in reality can be found in works by economist and historian Gabriel Kolko, a professor at the University of Wisconsin and later at Harvard.² In his book *Wealth and Power in America*, Prof. Kolko—an exponent of a new, progressive trend in historiography—exposes, on the basis of a large body of factual material, the falsity of the theory expounded by Kuznets, Galbraith, Lilienthal and others. Kolko believes that the chief methodological fault in the studies by representatives of the dominant school in American economics is that they ignore new forms of reward and the concealment by the ruling elite of their actual incomes. Income concealment has become a significant factor especially in connection with the sharp increase in income tax rates during and after World War II.³ In the year 1957 alone, nondeclared, and hence untaxed, income amounted to \$27.7 billion. "Nondeclaration of income to avoid taxes," writes Kolko, "is illegal, but it is so widespread that no study of income distribution can ignore it."⁴

Kolko agrees that the Americans with the lowest incomes are better off than they were in 1939. However, while acknowledging that their real wages have increased, he concludes that their overall share of the national income has not changed because the profits and incomes of the richer part of the population have also increased. Social commentators, writes Kolko, have been "guilty of coloring their discussion of American society since 1939 with unwarranted optimism and complacency."⁵

He calls this "prosperity" propaganda a myth. The fab-

¹ See Thurman Andrew, *Property, Profits and People*, Washington, 1954, p. 6.

² Gabriel Kolko, *Wealth and Power in America. An Analysis of Social Class and Income Distribution*, New York, 1964.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

ricators of the myth, he writes, regard America as a "nearly classless society".¹ Kolko stresses that conscientious and thorough research will reveal an enormous concentration of property in the hands of the tiny segment of the population in the top income brackets.² He shows that in 1951, two per cent of all stockholders owned 58 per cent of all American corporation stocks; 31 per cent owned 32 per cent of the stocks; while the remaining 67 per cent held only 10 per cent.³ "Despite such conclusive data on stock-ownership concentration," writes Kolko, "the public has been subjected to a widespread advertizing campaign alleging that the American corporation is owned democratically."⁴

Kolko cites numerous facts showing that part of the American population lives in poverty. In the spring of 1958, when Galbraith's book, *The Affluent Society*, was published, the United States had 5.5 million unemployed, not counting the millions of partially employed.⁵ Kolko draws this conclusion from the results of his study: "American society is based on a class structure, and it pervades most of the crucial facets of life. More than any other factor, the American class structure is determined by the great inequality in the distribution of income, an inequality that has not lessened although the economy's unemployment total has dropped."⁶

In the following years, it was poverty that aggravated the class struggle in the United States. One of its logical consequences were the Black disturbances in some American cities in 1964 and later, particularly in 1967 and 1968. They caused considerable alarm among the rich. It was not surprising that in this situation the ruling elite, with a fanfare of demagogic propaganda, set about elaborating "projects" to eliminate poverty. One of the initiators and inspirers was President Johnson, who solemnly announced his program for the creation of a Great Society free from poverty. In May 1965,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

he set before Arthur F. Bentley, who ran a seminar on the subject at Syracuse University, a number of questions on ways of achieving the Great Society. These questions had to do with such things as how to ensure maximum local initiative in combatting poverty, how to draw private institutions (i.e., the monopolies) into the work of achieving this humane objective, what role the federal government should play in this effort, and what individual citizens could do to help.

In late 1966, the economists in the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington made their first projections for a program to end poverty by 1976. "Unfortunately," observes Bertram Gross, the editor of a book called *A Great Society?*, "this was largely an idle statistical exercise."¹

Having escalated the war in Vietnam on which billions of dollars were being spent, President Johnson actually allocated only meager funds for combatting poverty. He said that the time had come when the nation must resolve the poverty problem. In fact, however, the war on poverty became in subsequent years a war against the poor. "As Commander-in-Chief," wrote Gross, "President Johnson has already visited the front lines of our armed forces in Asia. But neither he nor the Vice-President has toured the poverty lines in our own country. Here a new urban battlefield has erupted."²

The ideological core of the bourgeois historiography of the American labor movement is Gompersism. As we know, Gompers' entire activity and that of his followers in the labor movement was permeated with the policy of class peace between labor and management. Gompers developed a theory of adapting and subordinating the working class to the interests of big finance capital. Implanting disbelief in the effectiveness of political struggle by the proletariat, he called for steering the ship of labor out of the stormy water of revolutionary struggle, which, in his words, was fraught with the danger of smashing labor's hopes for success.

It is not surprising that some historians represent Gompers as a "great labor leader", the leader of so-called democratic unionism, while calling today's mass trade union movement

¹ *A Great Society?*, ed. by Bertram M. Gross, New York, London, 1968, p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

"coercive unionism" based on compulsory membership in accordance with the principles of the closed and union shop. A book by historian Maurice Franks, a supporter of Gompers, entitled *What's Wrong With Our Labor Unions?* is only one of many examples of viewing the problems of the labor movement in the United States from the positions of Gompersism. Franks comes down hard on those who departed from the principles of building the AFL proposed by Gompers. He advocates complete freedom for employers in their relations with workers and unions, reserving for the latter only the right to bargain for higher wages.¹ He disavows the successes of the organized working class in the struggle with the monopolies. In his view, it is capitalism, not militant unionism, that has enriched the life of workers.²

What Gompers put into practice in the AFL, historian John Commons tried to generalize and provide a theoretical basis for in his works. A discussion of his views may be found in the chapter on historiography in the first volume of the present work. Here it is fitting to note that, in the following decades, the basic propositions of the Wisconsin school of history which Commons founded were reflected in the works of bourgeois historians of the American labor movement.

To this day some writers buttress themselves by citing the pronouncements of the Wisconsin historians.³ They reiterate the assertions about the conservatism of American labor unions, about the banefulness of political involvement for workers, about their lacking any theory of industrial society, about their not having the slightest wish to undertake the risk of managing production, leaving this prerogative to the "managerial class", or, in reality, to the capitalist class.

Contrary to generally recognized facts which testify to the

¹ See Maurice R. Franks, *What's Wrong With Our Labor Unions?*, Indianapolis-New York, 1963, p. 108.

² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³ S. C. Sufrin and R. C. Sedgwick, *Op. cit.*; B. J. Widick, *Labor Today. The Triumphs and Failures of Unionism in the United States*, Boston, 1964; George P. Shultz, John R. Coleman, *Labor Problems: Cases and Readings*, New York, etc., 1953; Max M. Kampelman, *The Communist Party vs. the CIO: A Study in Power Politics*, New York, 1957.

growth of the class struggle in the country in the last decades, they not infrequently advertize Commons' unfulfilled prophecies concerning the inability of American trade unions to become mass organizations of the working class. Commons declared that "diffusion of corporate ownership, labor legislation and voluntary concessions by giant corporations have apparently rendered unionism unnecessary to many of the workers".¹ It was already clear in Commons' lifetime that his far-reaching predictions that the class struggle was without prospects had not been confirmed by the course of events. The eminent American economist and historian, Neil Chamberlain, rightly stressed in his work that the labor movement had "exploded into a militant mass movement in the 1930s".²

The propagators of the Wisconsin theory of "social mobility", according to which the door is open for all Americans to pass from one social class to another, try to prove that in the USA, unlike Europe, the labor movement is developing not as a proletarian movement but as a movement for turning the proletariat into a middle class.³ "If the wage-earning population of the United States looks more like a middle class than a proletariat," writes Lindblom, "the achievement is partly the unions'."⁴

Another important feature of the bourgeois historiography of the labor movement in the United States is anti-communism and cold war propaganda. After World War II, there was an increased flow of books falsifying the history of the Communist Party of the United States and its role in the labor movement.⁵

¹ B. J. Widick, *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

² Neil Chamberlain, *Labor*, New York, Toronto, London, 1958, p. 52.

³ George P. Shultz, John R. Coleman, *Op. cit.*, p. 63; Max Lerner, *America as a Civilization. Life and Thought in the United States Today*, New York, 1957, p. 468; Lester Velie, *Labor U.S.A.*, New York, 1959, p. XV.

⁴ Charles E. Lindblom, *Unions and Capitalism*, New Haven-London, 1949, p. 3.

⁵ Kenneth Ingram, *Communist Challenge*, Indianapolis, 1948; Frances P. Bolton et al., *Communism: Its Plans and Tactics*, Washington, 1948; *100 Things You Should Know About Communism and Education*, Washington, 1948; *Communism and Academic Freedom*, Seattle, 1949; James Burnham, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, New York, 1950; Massimo Salvadori, *The Rise of Modern Communism*, New York, 1952; F. J. Sheed, *Communism and Man*, London, New York, 1953; Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, New York,

Given wide distribution were such "treatises" as those which told Americans "100 things" they should know about Communism, or answered "200 questions" about Communist subversive activities.

Of the great number of American authors who have devoted their efforts to "studying" the Communist movement, we might mention Theodore Draper, Max Kampelman, D. A. Shannon, David Saposs, Massimo Salvadori and Mark Sherwin. Their chief aim, however, is not to get at the truth, but rather to distort the character of the movement as a whole and to represent the Communist Party as an alien organization "taking its cues from a foreign country". This line is followed by a whole string of anti-communists working in the social sciences.

Melvin Reder, for instance, repeats the insinuations about "the hand of Moscow" and "the Kremlin's directives".¹ Mark Sherwin declares the Communist Party to be the number one extremist organization, and presents it as "part of Russia's drive to communize the world".² Joseph Rayback takes up the widespread notion that Communist propaganda is "most effective where misery is deepest",³ and totally ignores all the other social and political conditions which, in aggregate, may give rise to a revolutionary situation.

David Saposs calls American Communism an "ultra-ideological opposition movement".⁴ His book, *Communism in American Unions*, is full of inventions about "Moscow's orders"

1957; George W. Cronin, *A Primer on Communism. 200 Questions and Answers*, New York, 1957; A. Bouscaren, *A Guide to Anti-Communist Action*, Chicago, 1958; J. Edgar Hoover, *The Story of Communism in America and How to Fight It*, New York, 1958; John Gates, *The Story of an American Communist*, New York, 1958; D. A. Shannon, *The Decline of American Communism. A History of the Communist Party of the United States since 1945*, London, 1959; David J. Saposs, *Communism in American Unions*, New York, Toronto, London, 1959; Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, New York, 1960; Nathan Glazer, *The Social Basis of American Communism*, New York, 1961; Mark Sherwin, *The Extremists*, New York, 1963.

¹ Melvin W. Reder, *Labor in a Growing Economy*, New York, 1957, p. 101.

² Mark Sherwin, *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

³ Joseph G. Rayback, *A History of American Labor*, New York, 1959, p. 317.

⁴ David J. Saposs, *Op. cit.*, p. VII.

to undermine the AFL.¹ He makes wide use of the expression "Communist penetration", declaring the Communists' participation in the labor movement an unlawful act of extremists.² Many writers distort the truth about the Communists' activity in the CIO and their international ties. A prominent place among them belongs to M. M. Kampelman and T. Draper. They are overtly hateful of both the Communists, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries (see Kampelman's *The Communist Party vs. the CIO: A Study in Power Politics*, and Draper's *The Roots of American Communism*).

Anti-communist writers make extensive use of a wide variety of epithets like "Red agents" and "dangerous radicals". Adapting to the "spirit of the times" and the demands of official propaganda, such scholars easily master the terminology and other devices used to discredit the progressive trend which the Communist Party represents in the labor movement.

At the same time, most of the books on the history of the American labor movement exude the spirit of "Americanism", which is also one of the main features of American bourgeois historiography. How an author of a textbook or monograph deals with the principles of "Americanism" is becoming a standard criterion for assessing his loyalty and scholarship. It is easy to see that "one hundred per cent Americanism" is merely dressed-up nationalism, and it is aimed at cultivating in the working class a sense of American superiority over other peoples.

Americans, it is proclaimed, have a supreme mission to perform. "Into our hands," writes historian Bailey, "has been thrust the torch of leadership for a free world. If we fall, all the other democratic nations will fall."³ Enumerating the stellar virtues of Americans, he declares that the United States has elaborated its own special "American way". The same idea of America's leadership of the "free world" is propounded by Clarence B. Randall, President of the Inland Steel Co., one of

¹ David J. Saposs, *Op. cit.*, p. 84.

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³ Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant. A History of the Republic*, Boston-Toronto, 1956, p. 949.

the major steel companies in the United States, in his book, *A Creed for Free Enterprise*.¹

Under the banner of Americanism, some writers extol the monopolies, the "economic miracle" of the American nation. Harvey Wish asserts that it was the captains of industry who made the decisive contribution to the creation of the unique American way of life.² David Lilienthal, exalting the big monopolies, regards big business as the fountainhead of human freedom.³ In this connection, mention should be made of the influence that the "school of business" continued to exert on the character of the historiography of the labor movement. In the view of such representatives of this trend as Allan Nevins and Joe Morris, history should serve the interests of big capital and help to educate American citizens in the spirit of loyalty to the idea of big business, in other words, loyalty to the big monopolies. The chief purpose of the social sciences should be to glorify the corporations as the economic basis of "prosperity" and the "American way of life". Representatives of the "school of business" write fat books about the "greatness" of billionaires.⁴ The main thrust of the "school of business" is aimed against the American labor movement and all democratic forces seeking a way out of the social and political blind alley into which the monopolies have brought the country.

In their coverage of the American nation's past, most of the books by bourgeois authors on the general history of the United States tend to skip over or leave in the background the mass movements of the working people and labor's strike struggle. Take for example the works by Nevins and Commager, Harry Carman, H. C. Syrett and Bernard Wishy, T. Harry Williams, Richard N. Current and Frank Freidel, Oscar Handlin, and John A. Garraty.⁵ These are major

¹ Clarence B. Randall, *A Creed for Free Enterprise*, Boston, 1952.

² Harvey Wish, *Society and Thought in Early America. A Social and Intellectual History of the American People Through 1865*, New York, London, Toronto, 1950.

³ David E. Lilienthal, *Op. cit.*, pp. 8, 9, 15.

⁴ William C. Richards, *The Last Billionaire. Henry Ford*, New York, 1948; Allan Nevins, *Ford. The Times, the Man, the Company*, New York, 1954; Joe A. Morris, *Nelson Rockefeller. A Biography*, New York, 1960.

⁵ Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, *A Short History of the United States*, New York, 1956; Foster Rhea Dulles, *The United States Since 1865*,

university publications with extensive bibliographies. But it is impossible to find material in them about the life and struggle of the working class. An exception, to some extent, is Foster Rhea Dulles' book, *The United States Since 1865*, which has a chapter on the labor movement. None of the other above-mentioned historians deemed it necessary to tell about the struggle of the workers against the monopolies and anti-labor legislation.

These books inform the reader about the activities of the ruling class, its parties and the politicians in the White House and Congress. Not surprisingly, their presentation of history is by presidencies and not by major stages of the nation's history. Thus, history is broken down into periods depending upon which of the bourgeois political parties or what leader was in power at a particular time.

This approach to the interpretation of the nation's past is characteristic not only of many writers dealing with the general history of the United States, but also of many writing on the history of the labor and trade union movement. One example is Philip Taft, a prominent historian and economist and the author of a book on the history of the AFL,¹ a major study based on documents. However, all this notwithstanding, he limits his history of the AFL to the activities of the executive council headed by Green, Woll, Hutcheson, Harrison, Dubinsky, Tobin and other leaders.

Taft recounts the history of the AFL's top leadership, virtually ignoring the working masses except for only rare references to the position of faceless workers who, it would seem, obediently followed their leaders. The reader will search in vain for an analysis of the unrest that gripped American workers toward the end of and after World War II in connection with the monopolies' encroachment on their living standards. The author shows not the slightest interest in the

University of Michigan Press, 1959; H. J. Carman, H. C. Syrett and B. W. Wishy, *A History of the American People*, Vol. II, *Since 1865*, New York, 1961; T. H. Williams, R. N. Current, F. Freidel, *A History of the United States*, New York, 1963; Oscar Handlin, *Op. cit.*; John A. Garraty, *Op. cit.*

¹ Philip Taft, *The A. F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger*, New York, 1959.

sentiments of the broad masses of working people, including that part of the working class that was organized in the AFL, or in the progressive role they played in the struggle against fascism during the war.

The book shows neither the activity of the Federation as a whole, nor of its major national or international unions. The author does not touch on the work of the big state federations, and bypasses internal contradictions and the struggle of the progressive opposition against the central leadership. The history of the AFL is presented through the reports, speeches and statements of members of the executive council and its president, William Green.

A similar approach and method of studying the key aspects of the economics and history of the labor movement are characteristic of Robert Leiter.¹ Such a one-sided approach to the history of the labor movement is no accident. It is typical of many other bourgeois writers standing on idealist or Gompersist positions.

During and after World War II, the attention of many American historians was drawn to the subject of the government's role in labor relations. The relationships between the unions, the monopolies and the government's mediation bodies were examined in detail, with special attention given to the legal and procedural aspects of these relationships.

Mediation and conciliation, federal and municipal systems of settling labor disputes, the principles of arbitration used by government agencies—these were the questions dealt with most widely in many studies on the labor movement. The theme running through most of the books on the labor question of those years was industrial class peace. It was no accident that these works abounded in chapter and section headings like "Strikes and How to Prevent Them", "Mediation and Conciliation", "Arbitration", "Labor-Management Cooperation", "Labor and Industrial Peace", etc. In examining such problems, the authors overlooked the struggle of the workers against the employers and failed to reveal the methods

¹ Robert D. Leiter, *Labor Economics and Industrial Relations*, New York, 1959.

and devices used by the authorities in suppressing strikes.¹

Another group of writers chose as their main topic the economic policies of the unions in the sphere of employment, wages, and union participation in determining work loads, working conditions, the length of the workday, payment for overtime, etc. They also examined wage and price stabilization, cost of living and related government and union policies.²

Many economists maintain that with the beginning of the war industry boom the country entered a period of economic development in which there was virtually full employment. They also share the view that in those years a long period of prosperity began for American workers. Massimo Salvadori, for instance, says that it extended to all strata of the American people. In his words, the people can accept capitalism or reject it without the risk of subjecting their condition to radical change. "They have chosen to keep it as an instrument, but with a clear conviction that they are using capitalism, not that capitalism is using them."³ Frank Freidel asserted in his speech at the 13th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Moscow that the war had brought full employment and a rapid rise in the purchasing power of workers.⁴

The attention of economists is increasingly drawn to such subjects as employment, the growth of wages, income distribution, and government policy both in labor relations and in the sphere of legislation. Heron, Sufrin and Sedgwick, Hansen, Jacoby, Ginzberg and Berman say that during the war and in

¹ See John H. Mariano, *The Employer and His Labor Relations*, New York, 1941; Kurt Braun, *The Settlement of Industrial Disputes*, Philadelphia, 1944; Neil W. Chamberlain, *Social Responsibility and Strikes*, New York, 1953; James Myers and Harry W. Laidler, *What Do You Know About Labor?*, New York, 1956.

² See Sumner H. Slichter, *Union Policies and Industrial Management*, Washington, 1941; *idem*, *Economic Factors Affecting Industrial Relations Policy in National Defense*, New York, 1941; John T. Dunlop, *Wage Determination Under Trade Unions*, New York, 1944; Harold W. Metz, *Labor Policy of the Federal Government*, Washington, 1945; *Problems of United States Economic Development*, Vol. 1, New York, 1958; Eli Ginzberg and Hyman Berman, *The American Worker in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1963.

³ Massimo Salvadori, *The Economics of Freedom. American Capitalism Today*, London, 1959, p. XII.

⁴ 13th International Congress of Historical Sciences, p. 12.

some of the postwar years the United States had full employment, and the economy began to feel an acute shortage of labor power. As for the Employment Act of 1946, these writers consider it a Magna Charta of economic planning. They portray it as a full employment law ensuring a balance between supply and demand. Write Nevins and Commager: "Full employment came without special stimulants, and carried the total of wage earners well past the sixty million mark."¹

We showed earlier the groundlessness of assertions made by some writers about full employment both during and after the war. Equally groundless was the talk about the disappearance of unemployment, whose growth in the postwar years caused serious alarm in the country's ruling circles.

Men of big business promote the idea that unionism is incompatible with a private enterprise economy. Industrialist Clarence Randall, quoted here earlier, declared that the root of the evil is "the all but irresistible pressure being brought to bear presently upon industry to pay wages that are not supported by equivalent increases in total product", and that the nightmare of the unions' persistent demands is with the employer "every day in the year. What may be theory for others is economic life and death for him."² Exaggerating the role of labor unions in the struggle for higher wages in recent decades, Randall maintains that "the vast power of the nationwide unions is such that management lacks power to resist unreasonable demands."³

One cannot help noticing the similarity between the opinion of this representative of big monopoly capital and the views expressed by many researchers in the history and economics of the labor movement. Most of these writers also accuse the unions of making unreasonably high wage demands. They consider this policy to have been the main cause of "creeping inflation" both during and after the war. For instance, Prof. John M. Clark of Columbia University regards wages as a "more aggressive factor" in inflation than the employers' desire to make big profits.⁴ Slichter, who holds the same view,

¹ Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, *Op. cit.*, pp. 518-19.

² *Problems of United States Economic Development*, Vol. 1, pp. 163-64.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

says that wages rise at a faster rate than the cost of living, that is, they grow faster than prices.¹ Echoing Clark and Slichter, Maurice Franks writes that labor unions "revolve about unrealistic wage demands, the 'more for more's sake', which has become the alpha and omega of union-leader economics, with no regard for inflationary impact".²

The idea that unionism is incompatible with a private enterprise economy is most clearly expressed by Lindblom in the introduction to his book, *Unions and Capitalism*.³ He asserts that the labor unions' successes weaken the capitalist economy and lead to unemployment or inflation. The destructive effect of the labor unions, he says, manifests itself in their attack against the system of "free competition",⁴ which they make through their battle for power against management and constant pressure for higher wages.

Lindblom calls the unions' pressure on wages their chief evil. Like his colleagues, he believes that with their excessive demands labor organizations disturb normal business relations between the workers and employers and thereby jeopardize the system itself. From this he comes to the conclusion that labor unions are monopolies. Their main method of struggle is the strike.⁵ The collective agreement, as the ultimate result of the strike struggle, becomes in the hands of the unions an instrument of monopoly power. On the basis of such accusations, writers like Lindblom rank the labor unions with the big monopolies in the economy. In drawing the analogy, they regard corporations as monopolies in commodity production and price fixing, and the unions as monopolies in supplying industry with labor power and determining wage levels.

Lindblom and W. V. Owen, the author of a textbook called *Labor Problems*,⁶ develop the labor union monopoly thesis in an effort to convince their readers that in the struggle on the

¹ Sumner H. Slichter, *Potentials of the American Economy*, p. 261.

² Maurice R. Franks, *Op. cit.*, p. 70.

³ Charles E. Lindblom, *Op. cit.*, p. V.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶ W. V. Owen, *Labor Problems*, New York, 1946.

economic front the unions have the same philosophy and use the same methods as the employers. They say that public opinion condemns the "labor monopolies" for ignoring the interests of the consumer, which, they allege, is not true of the industrial monopolies, and that labor unions come into conflict with society when they demand excessive wage increases.¹

The "labor monopoly" myth has long been used by the more extreme union haters. It was often used by Slichter, Richberg, Chamberlain, Herbert Marx, Franks, Sufrin, Sedgwick, Tannenbaum and other writers.² "All in all," says Slichter, "labor monopolies are by far the most powerful monopolies to be found anywhere in the economy."³ Slichter and Richberg, in particular seek to divert public attention from the constant threat to society posed by the monopolies. "Today the greatest concentrations of political and economic power in the United States of America," says Richberg, "are found—not in the over-regulated, over-criticized, over-investigated, and over-taxed business corporations.... The greatest concentrations of political and economic power are found in the under-regulated, under-criticized, under-investigated, tax-exempt, and specially privileged labor organizations—and in their belligerent, aggressive and far-too-often lawless and corrupt managers."⁴

Finally, a third group of writers have devoted their works mainly to explaining the reasons for the "beneficial" influence of "American democracy" on the nature of industrial labor relations.⁵ They declare Roosevelt's New Deal to be "people's capitalism", and describe the government's activity and

¹ Charles E. Lindblom, *Op. cit.*, pp. 22, 46, 131.

² Sumner H. Slichter, *Potentials of the American Economy*, Selected Essays, ed. by John T. Dunlop, Cambridge, Mass., 1961; Donald R. Richberg, *Labor Union Monopoly. A Clear and Present Danger*, Chicago, 1957; Neil W. Chamberlain, *Labor*, New York-Toronto-London, 1958; *American Labor Unions. Organization, Aims, and Power*, ed. by Herbert L. Marx, Jr., New York, 1950; Maurice R. Franks, *Op. cit.*; S. C. Sufrin and R. C. Sedgwick, *Op. cit.*; Frank Tannenbaum, *A Philosophy of Labor*, New York, 1951.

³ Sumner H. Slichter, *Op. cit.*, p. 417.

⁴ Donald R. Richberg, *Op. cit.*, pp. V, VI.

⁵ *Democracy and National Unity*, ed. by W. T. Hutchinson, Chicago, 1941; Byron R. Abernethy, *Liberty Concepts in Labor Relations*, Washington, 1943;

"creative approach" to the needs and interests of the working people as the principal factor in raising their living standards.

In many books and articles,¹ the idea is advanced that the bourgeois government played a decisive role in the successes scored by the labor movement on the eve of and during World War II. This view found its most concentrated expression in Harold Metz's book, *Labor Policy of the Federal Government*. Many of his propositions reflect the thinking of a number of American economists and historians. Among other things, Metz discusses labor legislation during the period 1926-1943. He lays emphasis on the role of the government, leaving the labor unions somewhere on the periphery of his research and not treating them as an active factor. He portrays the government as a humane force called upon to mitigate social conflicts.

In attributing the leading role in labor relations to the government, Metz stresses the paramount importance of the labor policy of Franklin Roosevelt, who had embarked on a liberal course. But he passes over in silence the role of the working class, paying no attention, for example, to its strike struggle. Primary attention is centered on the "goodwill" of the administration and Congress and their various agencies. His examination focuses on the Wagner Act, which Metz assesses as a great gift from the government to America's working people. The National Labor Relations Board, writes Metz, "attempts to make collective bargaining an immediate reality".²

While he idealizes the bourgeois state and its political

Osmond Fraenkel, *Our Civil Liberties*, New York, 1944; J. E. Walters, *Personnel Relations. Their Application in a Democracy*, New York, 1945; M. L. Cooke and Ph. Murray, *Organized Labor and Production. Next Steps in Industrial Democracy*, New York and London, 1946.

¹ See Carroll R. Daugherty, *Labor Problems in American Industry*, Boston, 1938; H. W. Metz, *Labor Policy of the Federal Government*, Washington, 1945; J. E. Walters, *Op. cit.*; Clyde E. Dankert, *Contemporary Unionism in the United States*, New York, 1948; Foster Rhea Dulles, *Op. cit.*; *American Labor Unions*, ed. by H. Marx, Jr.; A. J. Goldberg, A. F. of L.-CIO Labor United, New York, Toronto and London, 1956; S. C. Sufrin and R. C. Sedgwick, *Op. cit.*; *Labor and the New Deal*, ed. by M. Derber and E. Young, Madison, 1957; H. Faulkner and M. Starr, *Labor in America*, New York, 1957.

² H. W. Metz, *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

figures, Metz at the same time keeps silent about the numerous instances when the Wagner Act was sabotaged as a result of manipulations by monopolies seeking to nullify the potential of Roosevelt's liberal legislation. Metz offers a biased treatment of the wages problem. Neglecting, in particular, the gap between nominal and real wages, he gives Roosevelt the credit for raising wages. "From 1933 to the spring of 1942," he says, "the policy of the federal government was clearly that of increasing the wages of labor."¹ As can be seen from the Bureau of Labor Statistics figures he cited, hourly wages in manufacturing went up from 41.1 to 82.2 cents during that period. But the book leaves out the fact that not only that increase but also the further rise of hourly wages to 104.3 cents in May 1945 were the result of the special position of the United States during World War II and labor's unremitting struggle for higher wages, rather than the result of the Roosevelt administration's alleged constant concern for the workers' standard of living.

This becomes especially clear in the light of the fact that, as Metz himself informs us, President Roosevelt, worried about inflation, said on April 27, 1942: "Wages can and should be kept at existing scales."² We have already mentioned in the present work the Little Steel formula, which was designed not to raise wages but to freeze them at the 1941 level. Was it not the Roosevelt administration that tried to curb the growth of wages with this formula? Metz confesses that in the chapter on wages he will consider "the efforts of the government to raise wages and to prevent them from rising too high".³ This admission reveals the true nature of the regulatory role of the government, which was interested in limiting the growth of wages. Of course the actual job of holding them down was taken care of mainly by the employers themselves.

Far from all American historians were in agreement with the above explanations of the labor movement's successes in the 1930s. We might take as an example Sidney Lens, a long-time participant in the labor movement who wrote a number of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

books and articles about the American unions. To be sure, his works contain many contradictions, subjective assertions and misjudgements about the left-wing forces. He takes a hostile attitude toward the Communist Party and the left-wing unions in the CIO. However, unlike many other writers, Lens takes a realistic and objective approach to many issues, especially when dealing with the labor movement. Unlike the historians discussed above, Lens emphasizes the decisive role the mass labor movement played in bringing about congressional approval of Roosevelt's liberal legislation. He illustrates this abundantly, using a large number of major events in the history of the American labor movement as examples. He shows the proletariat in the struggle for its class interests.

In his book, *Left, Right and Center: Conflicting Forces in American Labor*, Lens says that Roosevelt's reforms became possible only after millions of unemployed went out into the streets and launched a fighting campaign for their adoption. "The legal right to organize granted by the New Deal merely crowned a *fait accompli* with government sanction. The right had already been won in the many bitter picket-line fights."¹ Lens' main point is that Roosevelt's labor policy itself was the direct result of the pressure exerted on the government by the masses. A similar view is held by historian Joseph Rayback, who also believes that through their strike struggle, particularly in 1934, the workers themselves promoted the passage of improved labor legislation by bringing pressure to bear upon Congress and the administration.²

It is this obvious fact that so many writers tend to overlook, mainly because focussing public attention on the activity of the popular masses is not part of the bourgeois propaganda program. At the same time, any description of the development of the American labor movement in the 1930s would be one-sided if the government's influence on the character and future of labor unions were denied. Roosevelt's labor policy had an undeniable impact on labor's struggle, promoting the activation and growth of its organizations. Actually, it was a

¹ Sidney Lens, *Left, Right and Center: Conflicting Forces in American Labor*, Hinsdale, 1949, p. 276.

² See Joseph G. Rayback, *Op. cit.*, p. 330.

two-way process in which the developing labor movement influenced the Roosevelt administration's policy and vice versa.

It was no accident that in the late 1940s and early 1950s the bourgeoisie undertook decisive steps to overhaul Roosevelt's policies and amend or repeal liberal New Deal laws such as the Wagner-Connery Act of 1935. First it imposed upon the working class the reactionary Taft-Hartley Act, later to reinforce it with other repressive laws. Increasingly persistent demands were voiced in bourgeois political party and big business circles to abolish concessions to labor and destroy the gains it had won.

The need for such changes in labor policy was expressed, for instance, by Republicans Harold Stassen and Fred Hartley, and by Donald Richberg, a well-known legal expert in monopoly circles. All three set forth systematic programs on the labor problem.¹

The need for repressive measures against the labor movement was formulated most clearly by Harold Stassen, a Republican presidential candidate. On February 7, 1947, appearing before the Senate Labor Committee, which was considering the bills proposed by Taft and Hartley, he said: "It appears to me that clearly in recent years too much power has been concentrated in the leadership of our labor unions and that power has been abused. New national legislation is needed to correct these abuses and limit excessive powers."²

Stassen proposed bringing "balance" into the Wagner Act because he felt that its provisions were formulated too much in favor of labor unions. "The unbalance of the Wagner Act toward labor," he said, "has been one of the real difficulties in the last twelve or thirteen years."³ Insisting that strikes during negotiations be banned, he favored imposing "the penalty of the loss of rights" on those taking part in a strike under those conditions. When asked by Sen. Ellender whether this would apply to all employees, Stassen replied: "To all employees, but

¹ Harold E. Stassen, *Where I Stand*, New York, 1947; F. A. Hartley, *Our New National Labor Policy. The Taft-Hartley Act and the Next Steps*, New York, 1948; Donald R. Richberg, *Op. cit.*

² Harold E. Stassen, *Op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

a specific penalty against those who cause or who promote the strike"¹.

As we can see, the chief demand made by Republican Party leader Stassen was to nullify Roosevelt's liberal legislation and go over to repressive measures against those who would defend labor's rights under the Wagner Act.

Industrialist Clarence Randall spelled out some other ideological principles of his class. In his view, the time had come when the ideological struggle could no longer remain a monopoly of professional ideologists. Prominent businessmen should step into this field and take the shaping of policy into their own hands.²

Randall was up in arms against the labor unions for blocking the way to establishing a "fraternity" between workers and capitalists, prevented workers from seeing the social purpose of their work, interfered in production, and deprived employers of their right to hire men of their own choice and set wage levels at their own discretion.³

With the turn in the US domestic policy toward strengthening reaction in the late 1940s a sharp change occurred in the character of the bourgeois historiography of the American labor movement. Roosevelt's economic policy during World War II, aimed at building government-owned enterprises, was now characterized as aggressive government control over a free economy, as almost socialization of capitalism. At the same time, the monopolies were in favor of government interference in the relations between labor and capital to the benefit of the latter.

For this purpose, it was necessary to launch a drive against the Wagner Act, a campaign for its amendment, and for new repressive legislation, of which the Taft-Hartley Act became the embodiment.

Many writers justified the moves toward harsher anti-labor legislation. In 1947, when the Taft-Hartley bill was still in preparation, Slichter, for example, wrote an article entitled "Trade Unions in a Free Society," which caused exultation in

¹ Harold E. Stassen, *Op. cit.*, p. 86.

² Clarence B. Randall, *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

³ *Ibid.*

the industrial community. Later, this article was included in a collection of Slichter's works.¹ In it, Slichter set forth propositions which were soon to be reflected in the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act.

Similar proposals were made at that time by Maurice Franks. Sen. Karl Mundt, a well-known reactionary, noted with admiration in his introduction to Franks' book that during the New Deal period Franks had "protested vigorously against the philosophy underlying the Wagner Act" and "many of the reforms advocated by Mr. Franks were incorporated in the Taft-Hartley amendments, enacted in 1947".²

In the years that followed, historiography increasingly adjusted to "the spirit of the times" dictated by the monopolies. As we have shown, the frontal attack against communism was closely linked with refined promotion of various anti-labor theories.

In the 1950s, it became fashionable to write about the "democratization of capital". Some authors went to the extent of picturing Wall Street as representing millions upon millions of American stockholders. "Wall Street," wrote Edward Dies, one of the experts on the subject, "is no longer a money lane ruled by a few lords of privilege, it is made up of millions of Americans who hold stock in corporations—merchants, doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, clerks, housewives, laborers, bankers and artists."³

What these writers were trying to prove was that the traditional oligarchic capitalism no longer existed, that it had been replaced, through the process of democratization, by a new "democratic people's capitalism".⁴ According to Salvadori, this new capitalism offers society advantages that the "old" capitalism gave to only a few individuals, and as a consequence "reformed capitalism is a surer road to a better life than collectivism or corporativism".⁵ Some other writers were busy

¹ Sumner H. Slichter, *Potentials of the American Economy*.

² Maurice R. Franks, *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

³ Edward Dies, *Behind the Wall Street Curtain*, Washington, 1952, p. 121.

⁴ Massimo Salvadori, *The Economics of Freedom. American Capitalism Today*, London, 1959, p. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

looking for recipes for the peaceful reform of a "unique capitalism" supposedly capable of ensuring equal rights in the means of production for all citizens. The advocates of this kind of capitalism argued that society could avoid the private appropriation of profit on capital and that the worker could keep the whole product he produced. To guarantee these equal opportunities was proclaimed to be the function and duty of a "just government".¹

Some economists and businessmen spread the idea that workers were interested in the growth of profits and their distribution through the purchase of stocks. Randall urged workers to buy stocks as a means of using their "free capital".²

Buying stocks is a profitable business for big stockholders, especially those having the controlling interest. The ordinary worker who owns a few stocks, however, is by no means a capitalist.

As the class struggle in American industry intensified, the strength of collective rebuffs given by workers to corporations kept growing. In the many bitter confrontations with labor unions in the preceding years the industrialists learned that methods of violence used alone were futile. Many employers were now giving more and more thought to the question of how to run their enterprises under the new conditions in which powerful and influential labor unions had become firmly established in industry and the workers had accumulated experience in fighting the monopolies.

Employers intensified the search for new forms and methods of achieving "class collaboration" between labor and management. The character of their propaganda among workers underwent noticeable change. The workers' sentiments were studied, sociological surveys and investigations were made, and a whole system of measures aimed at increasing labor efficiency was elaborated.

One of the means employers used to influence their employees was propaganda concerning human relations at enterprises. A new era had come, the workers were told, for along with the technological and structural changes in

¹ Thurman Andrew, *Op. cit.*, pp. 6, 44.

² Clarence B. Randall, *Op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

industry, the psychology of employers and workers was also changing. Mutual courtesy, consideration and respect, and paternal concern about the workers' needs had replaced the truculence of both sides.

A considerable number of historians, economists and sociologists took an active part in the search for "humanism and magnanimity" in class relations, devoting books and articles to this subject.¹ Underlying these studies was the denial of the existence in the United States of antagonistic contradictions that unavoidably lead to class struggle. David Lilienthal declared that class war between employees and owners was certainly "as dated and outmoded as the livery stable and the 'family entrance'". He went on to say that "the spirit in which even the most hotly contested strikes are carried on shows, in many small incidents, how deep we have buried the class-war philosophy".² The psychology of people, not class struggle, is what determines the character of relations in bourgeois society, these writers claim.

The historians Faulkner and Starr believe that the days are gone when labor unions had to fight against the tyranny and exploitation of short-sighted employers who strove only for profit.³ Whenever managers forget about human relations, write Daugherty and Parrish, the workers become suspicious and refuse to cooperate.⁴

Osgood Nichols and T. R. Carskadon call for "*More Human Treatment*: A worker wants to be considered as a human being.... He doesn't like to be thought of simply as a unit of work-energy....

"Modern management agrees in general with labor that far more emphasis should be placed on the worker's human problems on the job."⁵

¹ See J. E. Walters, *Op. cit.*; William F. Whyte, *Pattern for Industrial Peace*, New York, 1951; C. R. Daugherty and J. B. Parrish, *Op. cit.*; G. P. Shultz, J. R. Coleman, *Op. cit.*; Keith Davis, *Human Relations in Business*, New York, 1957; A. Magon, *Cooperation and Conflict in Industry*, New York, 1960.

² David E. Lilienthal, *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

³ See H. Faulkner and M. Starr, *Op. cit.*

⁴ See C. R. Daugherty and J. B. Parrish, *Op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

⁵ *American Labor Unions...*, ed. by Herbert L. Marx, Jr., p. 12.

In describing a strike at the Herbert Kohler enterprises in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, historian Adrian Paradis claims that "Kohler looked after its employees, for it was a highly paternalistic firm that had always felt responsible for its workers' welfare".¹ One might have believed this were it not for the fact that the workers at the Kohler enterprises waged a bitter strike struggle for eight years (from April 1954 to October 1962) for a collective bargaining contract.² Even George Meany admitted that this strike had become "a symbol of a bitter fight between a giant corporation and its workers".³

Many American writers regard collective bargaining not as a result of class struggle between the workers and capitalists but as a consequence of economic differences being resolved through improved human relations. This approach to a definition of labor's economic struggle emasculates the class character of the struggle. Garfield and Whyte, in particular, take this approach in their paper, "A Human Relations View of Collective Bargaining."⁴ They lay strong emphasis on the need to influence the worker's feelings, to evoke positive emotions in him. "We are not saying," they write, "that human relations are more important than economic considerations, or vice versa. We are simply saying that a mutually satisfactory relationship depends upon a proper tying together of economics and human relations."⁵

The objective in promoting human relations between labor and management was to weaken the impact of class contradictions and abate industrial strife.

Most historians and economists did not conceal their indignation at the growing strike movement. Authors like Heron, Northrup, Chamberlain and Lindblom wrote that strikes were doing harm to society. Heron, for example, held that strikes interrupted the marketing of output, which led to a fall in employment and a deterioration in the condition of the

¹ Adrian A. Paradis, *Labor in Action. The Story of the American Labor Movement*, New York, 1963, pp. 139-40.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 141-43.

³ *The American Federationist*, January 1956, p. 18.

⁴ *Labor Problems: Cases and Readings*, New York-Toronto-London, 1953.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

workers and society as a whole. Chamberlain also maintained that strikes upset the balance in the economy and the division of labor, and interrupted commodity circulation. To protect society from these misfortunes, he suggested an arsenal of means to avert strikes, the chief among them being extensive government interference in labor relations. Mediation, arbitration and government control were the recipes Chamberlain recommended.

Franks took an even more extreme position. He declared strikes to be "labor-czar machinations"¹ and claimed that unions made excessive demands and workers thought only about getting more money and doing less work. It is hard to believe, as anti-labor Senator Karl Mundt remarked, that Franks became associated with the American labor movement in his early twenties and "came to know at ground level the sentiments and aspirations of the hourly worker, the organized and unorganized alike".²

The attention of a number of labor historians was drawn to the activity of prominent labor leaders in the CIO, such as John L. Lewis, Sidney Hillman, Philip Murray and Walter Reuther, and the AFL—William Green, David Dubinsky, D. Tobin, Dave Beck, J. Ryan, J. Brown and others.³ Ideologically, both groups of leaders supported capitalism and its two-party system. In this sense, they were in step with each other and objectively served the same purpose—to preserve and strengthen capitalist society. At the same time, the books by the writers listed above enable us to see not only this common

¹ Maurice R. Franks, *Op. cit.*, p. 160.

² See Karl E. Mundt's introduction to Franks' book, *What's Wrong With Our Labor Unions?*, p. 11.

³ Bruce Minton and John Stuart, *Men Who Lead Labor*, New York, 1937; George Henry Soule, *Sidney Hillman. Labor Statesman*, New York, 1939; James A. Wechsler, *Labor Baron. A Portrait of John L. Lewis*, New York, 1944; Eli Ginzberg, *The Labor Leader*, New York, 1948; C. Wright Mills, *The New Men of Power. America's Labor Leaders*, New York, 1948; Wellington Roe, *Juggernaut: American Labor in Action*, Philadelphia and New York, 1948; S. Alinsky, *John L. Lewis, An Unauthorized Biography*, New York, 1949; Irving Howe and B. J. Widick, *The UAW and Walter Reuther*, New York, 1949; Charles A. Madison, *American Labor Leaders*, New York, 1950; Max Danish, *The World of David Dubinsky*, Cleveland and New York, 1957; Dallas M. Young, *Op. cit.*; Lester Velie, *Op. cit.*

ideological position of the labor leaders but also the differences in their destinies and in the role they played in the labor movement.

Most of the historians who write about individual labor leaders introduce a large dose of subjectivism into their appraisal of the role these leaders played. They focus on petty inessential particularities having little or no relevance to the social significance of the labor leaders. Too much importance is attached to personal relationships in the psychological vein, so that class and social relations are obfuscated.

In such cases, the labor leaders are depicted in isolation from concrete conditions, with no account taken of the influence exercised on them by the rank-and-file union membership. This unrealistic approach can be seen, for example, in the books by Minton and Stuart, Wechsler, Alinsky, Danish, and Velie. On the whole, however, labor historians describe two large groups of leaders in a struggle for dominance in the labor movement. The opinion of most of the writers is essentially that AFL leaders like Green, Frey or Woll strictly adhered to the conservative trend, seeking to implant craft unionism and bureaucracy in the unions. They were true defenders of Gompersist principles. As for the other group of leaders, headed by Lewis, Hillman, Murray and Reuther, they appear in the works of many historians as proponents of a more flexible approach to the demands of the times. While also remaining on capitalist positions, these leaders contributed to the successes of the labor movement. The historians credit them with the important contribution they made in launching a mass movement for the creation of industrial unions and the CIO.

However, most of the historical biographers are wont to idealize the labor leaders, with the only difference being that some express their sympathies for the Green-Woll group in the AFL, while others extol Lewis, Hillman, Murray and other CIO leaders. Particularly the biographers of Lewis and Dubinsky lose their sense of realism. Minton and Stuart call Lewis "Samson of Labor".¹ Velie writes that Lewis "had a glorious time playing the role of Titan battling the gods of

¹ Bruce Minton and John Stuart, *Op. cit.*, p. 84.

Olympus",¹ while "David Dubinsky is forever taking on Goliath", "this ... makes Dubinsky one of the most significant figures in labor", etc.² Thus, many writers handle the question of the role of the masses and the individual in social movements from idealist positions.

But even so, far from all historians take this approach in their appraisal of the labor leaders' activity. Charles Madison, C. Wright Mills, Wellington Roe and Sidney Lens, among others, subjected many of the labor leaders to sharp criticism, exposing their bureaucratic methods of leadership and the conservatism in their thinking and actions.

The most essential feature of the AFL and CIO leadership was, in Madison's opinion, hostility to socialist ideas. Many labor leaders were affiliated with conservative political circles. This applied above all to the AFL leaders, who, Madison points out, were as conservative politically and economically as any businessman. They were interested primarily in holding on to their well-paid jobs.

C. Wright Mills noted a number of ways in which the CIO leaders were better than their AFL counterparts. At the same time, while not concealing his sympathies with industrial unions, he stressed the danger that the CIO leadership could become similar to the AFL top level bureaucracy, where leaders held on to their posts for decades and became almost unchallenged labor barons.³

Labor democracy, as these writers show, was subjected to constant blows from the AFL upper clique. Wellington Roe, who was a prominent labor union functionary for almost a quarter of a century, ruefully observed: "Our trade unions, which should be models of democracy, are often dictatorships in which labor barons are the autocratic rulers of the dues-paying members."⁴ Well acquainted with the top officialdom, Roe said that "the trade union movement has become largely the patronage machine of a choice group of autocrats who passed their usefulness".⁵

¹ Lester Velie, *Op. cit.*, p. 151.

² *Ibid.*, p. 95.

³ See C. Wright Mills, *Op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁴ Wellington Roe, *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*

In his book, *The Crisis of American Labor*, Sidney Lens revealed the phony democracy of many AFL leaders.¹ He showed the degeneration of union leaders living off labor's purse. In the 1950s, the labor movement was going through difficult times, and it was, in Lens' opinion, labor leaders like Green, Woll, Tobin and Ryan who were to blame for the crisis.

The views of C. Wright Mills, Wellington Roe and Sidney Lens were not shared by most bourgeois historians and economists. The majority opinion was that American labor unions were models of "political democracy". Labor union democracy was seen by many as an integral part of bourgeois democracy. Economist William Leiserson wrote that "labor unionism in the United States is an expression of the American democratic spirit".² Supporting a similar appraisal of labor democracy given by the Maritime Union's paper, *The Pilot*, Leiserson asserted that American labor unions were "the most democratic organizations in the world".³

Leiserson vulgarized the concept of labor union democracy, belittling the role of the rank and file, whom he pictured as obediently following their leaders. "The rank and file," he wrote, "admire and rather prefer 'strong' leaders who win victories for the workers.... Such leaders 'bring home the bacon', and the members are content to leave to them the determination of policies and actions of the union. So long as the leaders keep the union strong, raise wages, or secure other gains, the members are usually content to follow them in whatever direction they want to go."⁴

The general history of the major labor union associations is examined from the same angle. Actually, there are not very many works on the history of the AFL and CIO. Philip Taft, Walter Galenson and Art Preis were among those who wrote on this subject.⁵ Since the first two were discussed in the

¹ Sidney Lens, *The Crisis of American Labor*.

² William M. Leiserson, *American Trade Union Democracy*, New York, 1959, p. 53.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁵ Philip Taft, *The A.F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to Merger*; Walter Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL. A History of the American Labor Movement, 1935-1941*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960; Art Preis, *Labor's Giant Step. Twenty Years of the CIO*, New York, 1964.

chapter on historiography in Volume I of the present work, we shall dwell here only on the third.

In the introduction to his book, Art Preis is presented as a long-time contributor to the weekly *Militant*, in which the first nine chapters of his book were published. The weekly was the mouthpiece of the Socialist Party, once influential in the American labor movement.

In his book, Preis examines the twenty-year history of the CIO, whose existence he assesses as a major step forward by American labor, which it undeniably was. However, his analysis of the history of this association is one-sided and subjective. He is unable to rise above the numerous facts and events to make an objective appraisal of their historical significance: he is hampered in this by his political views and sentiments, which were formed under the influence of right-wing Socialists and avowed Trotskyites.

Preis is overtly hostile to the democratic elements in the labor movement. He not only denies the positive contribution the progressive forces made to the creation of the CIO but also accuses them of subversive activities.

Preis' thick book gives a distorted and tendentious picture of the emergence of the CIO and the struggle of various trends within it. Primitively and slanderously he divides the CIO leaders into "Stalinists" and their opponents, putting the Communists and the leaders siding with them into the first category, and other leaders, who took a conservative position in the CIO, into the second. Even CIO leaders Joseph Curran and Mike Quill end up in Preis' arbitrary classification among the "Stalinists". He calls the tactical line of the Murray-Hillman group, which held a centrist position during the war, a bloc with the "Stalinists". These were only some of the facts from the history of the American labor movement that Preis unceremoniously and crudely falsified.

For a long time, American historians showed no particular interest in the international activities of the American labor unions, largely because the latter had only weak ties with labor movements abroad. Only in the last decade or so have some historians and economists given greater attention to the foreign relations of the American labor movement. Among the writers who devoted their works to an examination of the

international activities of labor organizations were John P. Windmuller, Lewis L. Lorwin, Everett M. Kassalow, George Lodge and Philip Taft.¹

In the postwar period, the socialist countries and the working class of a number of capitalist countries came to exert more and more influence on the course of history. The disintegration of colonialism imparted increasing importance to new states that were making their way to independent existence. Under these circumstances, the ruling circles of the United States placed special hopes on rightist labor leaders, such as Green, Meany, Woll, Dubinsky, Lovestone, Brown and Carey.

The above-mentioned writers keep silent about the connection between American imperialism and the energized international activities of the rightist labor leaders. Windmuller, for example, explains this increased activity as stemming from the transformation of the American people, once concerned primarily with domestic economic problems, into "a nation now convinced that its welfare is inextricably linked to the welfare of the world community".² According to Lorwin, American labor unions have become more active in international affairs because of changes in their ideology and status in society. In his view, the country's dynamic industrial development and national traditions tend to make American labor organizations reject the ultimate goals of the movement.³

Unlike these writers, George Lodge speaks of the connection between the government's foreign policy and the international activities of the American labor unions.⁴ He believes that the labor leaders act in accordance with the government's foreign policy, and take part in carrying out this policy by holding posts in State Department agencies, especially in US embassies as

¹ John P. Windmuller, *American Labor and the International Labor Movement 1940 to 1953*, New York, 1954; Lewis L. Lorwin, *The International Labor Movement. History, Policies, Outlook*, New York, 1953; George Lodge, *Spearheads of Democracy. Labor in the Developing Countries*, New York and Evanston, 1962; *National Labor Movements in the Postwar World*, ed. by Everett M. Kassalow, Northwestern University Press, 1963; Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*

² John P. Windmuller, *Op. cit.*, p. XII.

³ See Lewis L. Lorwin, *Op. cit.*, p. XVI.

⁴ George Lodge, *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

labor attachés. However, Lodge and the other above writers hold common views on the necessity of promoting anti-communism in the international activities of labor organizations.

Lorwin believes that the international activities of the American unions are the monopoly of a labor élite.¹ And Windmuller notes that "probably no other area of labor's activities has permitted labor leaders as much freedom of action as the relations with international labor movements".² Some writers also point out that the competition between the AFL and CIO leaders has manifested itself especially over international issues.³ Lorwin, Saposs and Steinbach pay much attention to this question, approaching it from three angles. First, they analyze the development of the international labor movement from the standpoint of internationalism and nationalism; second, they examine the changes taking place in the labor movements of individual countries; and finally, they trace the trends in the American labor movement.

Steinbach holds that internationalism and solidarity are declining, a process that began, he says, on the eve of World War II. After a certain upturn, this weak tendency toward solidarity was reduced almost to nil.⁴ Lorwin is less categorical. On the one hand he asserts that in some countries internationalism comes into conflict with nationalism, but on the other, he says that there are opposing factors which make international cooperation a real necessity.⁵

There are obvious distortions of reality in some of the assessments of the changes in the labor movements of individual countries. Kassalow and Saposs, for instance, maintain that the European labor movement gradually abandoned socialist ideology. As for the French and Italian movements, these were, Kassalow feels, only a deplorable exception.⁶

Most of the writers admit that there are disagreements

¹ See Lewis L. Lorwin, *Op. cit.*, p. 342.

² John P. Windmuller, *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

³ See George Lodge, *Op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁴ See *National Labor Movements...*, ed. by Everett M. Kassalow, p. 39.

⁵ See Lewis L. Lorwin, *Op. cit.*, p. 333.

⁶ *National Labor Movements...*, ed. by Everett M. Kassalow, p. 342.

between European and American labor unions, but rather than making a careful analysis of their causes they reduce everything to differences in tactics. However, as is known, the differences between the American and the West European labor movement involve more than merely tactical differences. In a number of European countries the working people's political awareness and activity are higher and their pressure on labor leaders considerably stronger than in the United States.

Some writers make pessimistic assessments of the conditions in which American labor leaders operate in the developing countries. Especially indicative in this respect is George Lodge's monograph, which criticizes not so much the policies of the American labor leaders as their methods and tactics.¹ Lodge is ready to accept labor union collaboration with political parties in many cases, although he makes the reservation that this kind of collaboration is tolerable when it stands in the way of the Communists.

Such historians often paint a deliberately distorted picture of the conditions under which the international activities of American labor unions are conducted. They seek to belittle the importance and distort the character of the World Federation of Trade Unions. Thus, Philip Taft calls it a "Communist instrumentality" supposedly aimed against the American labor movement, and especially against the AFL.² He characterizes the Marshall Plan "as a means for enabling Europe to regain its economic well-being" and as providing "a basis for united action by the trade unions of the free world", and approves of the splitting line pursued by the AFL in the international labor movement.³

There are other writers specializing in the study of the international activities of American labor unions, who march in step with Taft. They contrast the ICFTU, whose creation they consider a great victory of American labor unions, to the WFTU, and even represent the discord within the ICFTU as a sign of strength and democracy. In this respect, Lodge above

¹ George Lodge, *Op. cit.*

² Philip Taft, *Op. cit.*, p. 377.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 379-80.

all expresses dissatisfaction with the tendency toward rapprochement between some trade unions in Western Europe and their counterparts in socialist countries. He and other writers press for the continuation of the cold war and retention of the bans on contacts with trade unions of socialist countries. All this is essentially an attempt to justify the splitting policies pursued by American labor leaders and the ICFTU leadership in the international labor movement.

Among contemporary American historians, economists and sociologists there are substantial differences in views on the development of labor unions and their role in society.

Earlier, we mentioned a whole group of writers who elaborated absurd notions about a "labor monopoly". In the 1960s, these assertions were repeated even more often. It was claimed that labor unions were "irresponsible, aggressive and corrupt", and that they intended to seize political power and create their own, labor, government.

These inventions were aimed at setting the public against the unions. Exaggerating labor's strength and fostering fear of the "labor monopoly", historians sought to justify repressive measures against the labor movement.

In contrast to this direction, the 1960s saw the emergence of a group of historians of a critical trend, associated mainly with the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions at Santa Barbara, California. We have in mind Clark Kerr, Paul Jacobs, Albert Blum, A. Ross, and Solomon Barkin.¹

These writers subjected labor unions to strident criticism, emphasizing only the shortcomings in their activities. They argued that the organized labor movement was in a deep crisis and that labor unions were standing still in their development, while the situation was rapidly changing. The labor unions, Kerr maintained, were ideologically and organizationally in a blind alley. Paul Jacobs saw the crisis of the labor unions as

¹ Clark Kerr, *The New Opportunities for Industrial Relations*, Berkeley, 1961; Paul Jacobs, *The State of the Unions*, New York, 1963; Solomon Barkin and Albert A. Blum, "Is There a Crisis in the American Trade-Union Movement?", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1963, pp. 16-24; A. Ross, *Labor Organizations and Labor Movement in Advanced Industrial Society*, Berkeley, 1965.

stemming from a breakdown of their main instrument, collective bargaining. The unions, in his opinion, have proved to be defenseless before the social consequences of the technological revolution.¹

The sharp criticism of the labor movement prompted some labor union figures to take pen in hand as well. In his book, *New Horizons for American Labor*, Joseph Beirne, president of the Communications Association of America and a vice-president of the AFL-CIO, does not set out to refute the criticism levelled at the labor unions. His aim, rather, is to find ways and means of correcting the shortcomings criticized. The labor movement, he says, needs a clear idea of its aims and tasks for the future. However, this is hampered by the conservatism and inertness of the top labor leadership, its inability or unwillingness to adjust to the rapidly changing situation both inside and outside the United States. "A continuation of the present course," according to Beirne, "can only lead to paralyzing decline."²

Beirne sees the new horizons for the labor movement in the government's policy. He believes that only the government can solve the numerous social problems brought about by the technological revolution, and the task of labor unions is to get it to do so.

In this connection, the labor leadership should, in Beirne's opinion, shift the focus of its attention from private enterprise to the activities of federal government officials. He believes that organized labor has already got all it can from the corporations. "The area of possible improvement," he writes, "in larger terms, no longer lies entirely with the employer."³ Now the workers' living standards can be raised, in his opinion, only through measures taken on a national scale. On this basis Beirne argues the necessity and desirability of active government interference in labor relations.

Events, however, refute his hasty conclusions. Time and again workers go out on strike to press their demands, and have no intention of closing their accounts with the employers.

¹ Paul Jacobs, *Op. cit.*, p. 263.

² Joseph A. Beirne, *New Horizons for American Labor*, Washington, 1962, p. 27.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

On the contrary, as exploitation intensifies and corporation profits mount, the workers' demands grow.

Bourgeois historians of the moderate trend do not frighten their readers with allegations about labor's monopoly power and are least of all inclined to criticize the labor movement along these lines.¹

Thus, Daniel Bell praises labor unions for having been able to improve the workers' condition without turning into a revolutionary anti-capitalist instrument. He sees in this the main reason for the absence in the United States of a mass labor movement bent on overthrowing the bourgeois system. This kind of assessment is not an end in itself for such writers. They have a broader aim—to prove the "groundlessness" of Marx's revolutionary ideas under the conditions of American capitalism.

Sufrin and Sedgwick go even further. For them, the ideas of class collaboration are too radical. They find neither class, nor economic, nor social causes in labor conflicts. Conflicts arise, says Sufrin, not between worker and employer but between man and nature. In this scheme of things, labor unions are assigned the modest role of maintaining "normal" relations in industry. All we need, it turns out, is to improve people's moral qualities and industrial strife will disappear.² This philosophy is aimed at the working class, especially in its simplified form as found, for instance, in the works of economist Dallas Young, where the capitalist and the worker are merely "partners in production" and the difference between them is regarded as being highly relative.³

The historians of the moderate trend try to examine the labor movement in its evolution. To one extent or another they admit the class character of labor conflicts. However, they never go beyond the framework of class collaboration in their

¹ Richard A. Lester, *As Unions Mature. An Analysis of the Evolution of American Unionism*, Princeton, 1958; Ross Stagner, *The Philosophy of Industrial Conflict*, New York, 1956; Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1960; Lloyd Ulman, *American Trade Unionism—Past and Present*, Berkeley, California, 1961; Chester A. Morgan, *Labor Economics*, Homewood, Illinois, 1962.

² S. C. Sufrin and R. C. Sedgwick, *Op. cit.*

³ Dallas M. Young, *Op. cit.*

conclusions. The history of the labor movement and the vigor and militancy of labor unions are represented as being in decline from the 1930s onward.

Ross Stagner, who acknowledges the existence of classes and class conflicts, does not see any grounds for "open war" between the classes in the United States, since labor disputes, in his opinion, are taking on a more peaceful character.¹

In the opinion of Richard Lester, problems of mediation and compromise with employers have begun to occupy an important place in the affairs of labor leaders. The "rash" militancy of labor unions has been superseded by moderation and discipline. In the final analysis, he acknowledges that the evolution took place at the top, in the sphere of leadership. The rank-and-file masses supposedly remained inert, which gave the leaders a free hand. By strengthening the governing apparatus, they secured for themselves long tenure in key posts.

Thus, Lester sees only two features in the development of the labor movement—(a) the rightward evolution of the labor leadership toward opportunism and reconciliation and (b) the settled indifference of the rank-and-file masses. However, the whole diversity of the processes taking place in industrial relations does not fit into this scheme.

Historian Chester Morgan established two phases in the labor-employer relationships: "The two institutions—organized labor and employer interests—typically begin their relationships in an atmosphere of *hostility and open warfare*.... But strangely enough, there is a second phase of institutional relationship which is reached by the majority of labor market institutions. This phase might be termed the phase of *armed truce and uneasy toleration*." Further on, Morgan adds: "Finally, labor market institutions may attain the phase of genuine cooperation, although to date in this nation, only a minority have done so."² A bourgeois scientist, Morgan does not use the term "class struggle". However, various forms of class struggle are inherent in his phases.

Of the many books on the labor movement, we have

¹ See Ross Stagner, *Op. cit.*, p. 155.

² Chester A. Morgan, *Op. cit.*, pp. 636, 637.

mentioned only those which are more or less typical of certain trends in contemporary American historiography. However different they may seem, these trends have a common ideological basis—denial of the existence of antagonistic class relations between labor and capital.

The Marxist trend occupies a special place in the literature on the history and economics of the American labor movement. It is aimed against monopoly capitalism and the domination of capital.

The proponents of this direction have had to wage a difficult ideological struggle against superior enemy forces. For Americans who criticize the bourgeois system, such things as freedom of speech, press, assembly and association became a fiction long ago. Instead, they are threatened with prosecution, prisons and police persecution.

But even under these conditions, representatives of the Marxist direction in the American historiography of the US labor movement never balked in the face of difficulties. Valuable contributions were made by William Z. Foster, Eugene Dennis, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Gus Hall, Herbert Aptheker, Victor Perlo, Philip S. Foner, Hyman Lumer, George Morris and J. M. Budish, among others. An active part in creating the democratic literature was taken by such writers, historians, economists and publicists as Theodore Dreiser, Richard O. Boyer, Herbert M. Morais, George Marion, Albert Kahn, and Corliss Lamont. All are united by a desire to establish the truth in their works, to help Americans see the capitalist essence of the social and political system of the United States, and by their fight for peace, democracy and progress. Unlike bourgeois authors, they examine social conflicts from the standpoint of the class struggle. The ideological core of their concept is struggle against monopoly domination in the economy, politics and ideology.¹

¹ John M. Blair, Harrison F. Houghton and Matthew Rose, *Economic Concentration and World War II*, Washington, 1946; J. M. Budish, *People's Capitalism*, New York, 1958; Hyman Lumer, *War Economy and Crisis*, New York, 1954; Victor Perlo, *American Imperialism*, New York, 1951; *idem.*, *The Empire of High Finance*, New York, 1957; *idem.*, *Militarism and Industry, Arms Profiteering in the Missile Age*, New York, 1963; William Z. Foster, *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, New York, 1949.

American Marxist historians deal with a wide range of contemporary political problems. They expose Gompersism as a typical expression of bourgeois ideology in the working class, and criticize the principles of narrow trade unionism.¹ They affirm man's right to political freedom and democracy, resolutely protest against the persecution of people holding heterodox views, condemn the anti-Communist hysteria, expose the police character of the bourgeois state, and show the real essence of anti-labor legislation, the government's interference in labor relations, and bourgeois democracy.²

An important merit of the Marxists is their consistent effort to reveal the role of the masses in historical developments. Meetings and demonstrations, strikes and picketing, clashes with strikebreakers and the police, and the Communists' speeches during court trials—all this finds a place in their works.³ In their books, attention is focussed mainly on the role of the working class in American history. Their treatment of the labor movement is closely tied in with the general democratic struggle of the people as a whole. At the same time, the left-wing writers also discuss the weak points of the labor and communist movements.

An important place in Marxist historiography is given to the role of the Negro people in the American working people's movement for their rights. This subject is dealt with in its many aspects. The economic and legal status of the Negro people and their struggle for democracy and civil rights are analyzed

¹ Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. I, *From Colonial Times to the Founding of the American Federation of Labor*, New York, 1947; idem, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. II, *From the Founding of the American Federation of Labor to the Emergence of American Imperialism*, New York, 1955; William Z. Foster, *American Trade Unionism*, New York, 1947; George Morris, *American Labor: Which Way?*, New York, 1961.

² Corliss Lamont, *Freedom Is As Freedom Does. Civil Liberties Today*, New York, 1956; Albert E. Kahn, *High Treason, The Plot Against the People*, New York, 1950; George Marion, *The Communist Trial. An American Crossroads*, New York, 1949.

³ Eugene Dennis, *Letters from Prison*, New York, 1956; Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *The Alderson Story. My Life as a Political Prisoner*, New York, 1963; William Z. Foster, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, New York, 1951; Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story*, New York, 1955; Philip Bonosky, *Brother Bill McKie*, New York, 1953.

in extensive papers, major books and articles. One of the outstanding champions of the Black people's emancipation movement was William DuBois, who devoted his life to the struggle for civil rights and genuine equality of Black Americans. The logical result of his long life and struggle was his joining the Communist Party.

A widely known representative of the Marxist wing of the American historiography of the labor movement was William Z. Foster. His speeches, articles and books are an important contribution to the Marxist interpretation of the class struggle and the communist movement in the United States. The postwar period saw the publication of Foster's major works devoted to the political history of America, the history of the Black people and the international labor, socialist and communist movements.¹

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of the studies made by historians Herbert Aptheker and Philip Foner. Their scholarly works are based on a rich collection of archive materials and deal with the general history of the American people and the labor movement. Some have been published in the Soviet Union, winning wide recognition.

The eminent economists Victor Perlo, Hyman Lumer and J.M. Budish have given a Marxist analysis of American imperialism during and after World War II. Their research is focussed on state-monopoly capitalism, its economics and politics. Perlo's major works expose the methods by which the monopolies enrich themselves, and show their socio-economic structure and competitive struggle for dominance in the country's economy. In contrast to bourgeois economists, the Marxist writers on the history of the labor movement reveal the real causes of the class struggle in the country. They strike at the theories found in bourgeois historiography concerning "progressive" or "people's" capitalism, the "affluent society", the "welfare state", workers' "prosperity", the "revolution" in the distribution of the national income, and the gradual disappearance of classes. They, thereby, wage a struggle against the basic theory of conservative writers about "exceptionalism" in the development of American capitalism.

¹ See bibliography in Vol. I of the present work.

The prominent participant in the American labor movement, George Morris worked for over 30 years for the Communist Party's press organs, mainly the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker*. He wrote a number of books, pamphlets and many articles on various aspects of the class struggle.¹ In his book, *American Labor: Which Way?* he gives a thorough analysis of labor's struggle and draws a number of important conclusions on complex questions of the theory and tactics of the labor union movement. In his book, *CIA and American Labor*, Morris exposes the connections between the Central Intelligence Agency and the AFL-CIO leaders in the foreign policy field. On the basis of a vast body of materials, he uncovers the subversive activities of the Meany-Lovestone clique in the labor movements of Latin America and Africa.

In books listed here earlier, the well-known progressive publicists George Marion, Corliss Lamont, C. Wright Mills and Albert Kahn expose monopoly oppression and come out against the persecution of the Communist Party, the trade unions and democratically-minded intellectuals. They bring home to the reader the truth about the class essence of bourgeois democracy, which works against Americans who demand freedom not in word but in deed and adherence to the principles of the Constitution so crudely and frequently violated by the political institutions of the bourgeois state.

Historians Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais have brought out numerous facts from the past of the American labor movement.² In their book, *Labor's Untold Story*, they have told of the tragic fate of preceding generations of workers and showed the history of ordinary people whose labor created the nation's wealth. No bourgeois historian has dared tell this real truth about the life of men and women of labor. Boyer and Morais describe the class battles, defeats and successes of American labor. The history of the labor movement in the

¹ George Morris, *Where Is the CIO Going?*, New York, 1959; *idem*, *The CIO Today*, New York, 1950; *idem*, *The Smith ... McCarran ... Taft-Hartley. Conspiracy to Strangle Labor*, New York, 1951; *idem*, *American Labor: Which Way?*, New York, 1961; *idem*, *CIA and American Labor. The Subversion of the AFL-CIO's Foreign Policy*, New York, 1967.

² Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais, *Op. cit.*

USA, they write, is the history of the American people, and the great motive forces that determined the historical destiny of the people were the same forces that were instrumental in the formation of the labor movement.

Many books and pamphlets about the labor movement are published in the United States, but only a few talk about common people, their aspirations and their struggle. One of these few is a small book about the progressive union of Pacific Coast longshoremen. This pamphlet, called *The ILWU Story*, was written by members of the union's executive committee, and it deserves every recognition for the truth it tells about the life and struggle of the San Francisco dockers. As the authors remark, "this is history. This is history that's too little noted in the schools."¹

There is a great abyss lying between the ideologists of the bourgeois system and those who express the interests of the proletariat. That abyss is revealed in their principles and approach to the study of the history of the labor movement in the USA.

Such are some of the specific features of the American historiography of the US labor movement during and after World War II. Only a general description of the bourgeois and democratic directions is presented here.

Works by Soviet authors dealing with the American labor movement² are part of our American studies and of Marxist historiography in general. The working-class movement in the USA has long drawn the attention of historians and economists, whose joint efforts have contributed to a Marxist understanding of the general trends and nature of the struggle going on in that country.

Methodologically, the present work is based on the Marxist-Leninist approach, which provides the key to a scientific treatment of complex socio-economic processes. Lenin's teaching on imperialism and state-monopoly capitalism, socialist revolution and the state, classes and parties, bourgeois and

¹ *The ILWU Story*. San Francisco, 1963.

² See the detailed article by Soviet historian V. K. Furayev, «Советская историография классовой борьбы в США в новейшее время», in the historiographical collection, *Проблемы всеобщей истории*, Leningrad, 1967.

socialist democracy, and trade unions in many ways facilitates our understanding of contemporary problems of the US labor movement.

The first volume of the present work contains a brief survey of works by Soviet writers relating to certain questions of the labor movement in the USA between the two world wars. The study of the American labor movement was almost completely halted during World War II. It was only in the postwar period that the economic condition and strike struggle of American workers drew the attention of some Soviet historians.

During the first decade after World War II materials on the history and economics of the labor movement in the USA were gathered and studied. In that period, the first dissertations in this field for the degree of Candidate of Sciences were written, and articles and the first books on the subject appeared. They dealt with certain aspects of the history of the AFL and CIO during and after World War II, the struggle of the progressive forces in the USA for civil rights and against anti-labor legislation, and the role of the Black people in the general democratic movement.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the range of research broadened. In particular, the history of the Communist movement in the USA and the economic condition and strike movement of the working class began to be studied. The international activities of the AFL and CIO were also subjected to critical analysis. During these years the first studies were published, mostly on state-monopoly capitalism and the current political history of the United States. The treatment of the fundamental problems of the labor movement became more creative. Many questions began to be resolved in a new way, with account taken of a wider range of documents, books and labor periodicals. Soviet researchers began to show more interest in studying such questions as US labor legislation, the role of the American working class in contemporary social movements, the struggle of progressive workers against the militaristic policies of the ruling circles, and so on.

Soviet authors analyze the struggle between the two trends in the labor movement and show the democratic traditions in the working class and the processes going on in the class consciousness of the proletariat. The attention of Marxists is

being increasingly drawn to the bourgeois historiography of the American labor movement, although only the first steps have been taken in this field. A number of writers continue to study the history of the Communist movement. Books are published dealing specifically with the life and struggle of the Negro working people. The number of books about the American labor movement during and after World War II has grown.¹ In addition, but not within the scope of this chapter to examine, there have been many articles devoted to various aspects of the labor movement in the USA published in magazines, journals and books of readings.

Recent developments in the American labor movement have also been dealt with in works on the general history of the United States. These include studies by individual authors, and collective efforts by members of the Institute of History, the Institute of World Economy and International Relations and the Institute of the International Labor Movement, USSR Academy of Sciences.²

¹ В. П. Андросов, *Методы борьбы американских монополий против рабочего класса*, Moscow, 1958; *idem.*, *Положение рабочего класса США*, Moscow, 1960; М. В. Баглай, *Законодательство США в борьбе с забастовочным движением*, Moscow, 1960; И. Геевский, *Верные слуги монополий*, Moscow, 1962; А. А. Гречухин, *Уильям З. Фостер*, Moscow, 1959; В. Корольков и А. Медведев, *Рабочее и профсоюзное движение в США после второй мировой войны. 1945-1953*, Moscow, 1955; Б. Я. Михайлов, «О некоторых особенностях экономического положения и стачечной борьбы рабочего класса США после второй мировой войны (1945-1955)», *Уч. зап. Института истории*, вып. IV, Moscow, 1958, pp. 423-90; *idem.*, *Конгресс производственных профсоюзов США. 1935-1955* (Из истории американского рабочего движения), Moscow, 1959; Н. В. Мостовец, *Рабочее движение в США после второй мировой войны*, Moscow, 1957; В. П. Павлов, *Критика теорий «классового мира» в США*, Moscow, 1963; А. В. Скворцов, *Развитие марксистской мысли в США (1919-1959)*, Tbilisi, 1960; Н. И. Сомин, *Основные вопросы рабочего и коммунистического движения в США после второй мировой войны*, Moscow, 1961; Т. Тимофеев, *Негры США в борьбе за свободу*, Moscow, 1957; *idem.*, *Пролетариат против монополий*, Moscow, 1967; В. К. Фураев, *Как живут и борются рабочие в США*, Moscow, 1964; А. Н. Шлепаков, *Иммиграция и американский рабочий класс в эпоху империализма*, Moscow, 1966.

² Н. Н. Яковлев, *Новейшая история США*, Moscow, 1961; Е. В. Ананова, *Новейшая история США, 1919-1939*, Moscow, 1962; *Очерки новой и новейшей истории США*, т. II, Moscow, 1960; В. И. Лан, *США в военные и послевоенные*

An important step in the development of historiography was the publication of a collective work by the Department of History at Moscow University on the historiography of the modern and recent history of the countries of Europe and America.¹ This is the first attempt by the chair of modern and recent history at the University to give a general picture of the historiography of the socialist countries and of certain capitalist countries, including the United States.

Important contributions to the study of such important problems as the economic status and working conditions of American workers, wages, employment, unemployment, and the impact of technological progress on the condition of workers have been made by Soviet economists, who have published many valuable works which help to clarify a number of complex economic questions. Cooperation between historians and economists is an important requisite for a thorough study of the class struggle, especially at the present time, when the contradictions in American industry have become even sharper.²

годы, Moscow, 1964; *Проблемы современного капитализма и рабочий класс*, под ред. А. Арзуманяна и А. Румянцев, Moscow, 1963; *Против реформизма, за единство рабочего движения*, под ред. Е. М. Жукова и др., Moscow, 1966; *Современный рабочий класс капиталистических стран*, под ред. В. В. Любимовой и др., Moscow, 1965; *Экономическая политика правительства Кеннеди. 1961-1963*, под ред. С. М. Меньшикова, Moscow, 1964; *Международное революционное движение рабочего класса*, под ред. Б. Н. Пономарева, А. Арзуманяна, В. Снастина и Т. Тимофеева, Moscow, 1966.

¹ *Историография новой и новейшей истории стран Европы и Америки*, под ред. И. С. Галкина (отв. редактор), И. П. Дементьева, А. Д. Колпакова, А. Л. Нарочницкого, О. С. Сороко-Цюны, Moscow, 1968.

² Е. С. Варга, *Современный капитализм и экономические кризисы. Избранные труды*, Moscow, 1963; В. С. Гойло, *Теоретическое оправдание безработицы. Буржуазные теории занятости*, Moscow, 1966; С. А. Далин, *Военно-государственный монополистический капитализм в США*, Moscow, 1961; *Милитаризация экономики США и ухудшение положения трудящихся*, под ред. М. И. Рубинштейна, Moscow, 1953; *Монополистический капитал США после второй мировой войны*, под ред. М. И. Рубинштейна и др., Moscow, 1958; В. А. Чепраков, *Государственно-монополистический капитализм*, Moscow, 1964; Р. И. Цвылев, *Социально-экономические последствия технического прогресса в США*, Moscow, 1960; С. М. Меньшиков, *Экономика капитализма и ее противоречия на современном этапе*, Moscow, 1966; *Политическая жизнь в США*, Moscow, 1966; В. И. Громека, *Автоматизация*

The Soviet Marxist historians regard their efforts as being only the first attempts at studying the complex problems of the history of class relations in American industry.

What has already been done along these lines by historians and economists in the Soviet Union represents only the beginning of work in one of the most complex aspects of American studies, namely, in-depth and comprehensive study of the history of the labor movement in the United States. There is a need for a more profound analysis of a number of questions that have as yet been insufficiently studied. Among these, the following deserve attention:

the specific features of the economic, political and ideological struggle of the American proletariat in the conditions of the scientific and technological revolution;

the social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution and their effect on structural changes in the composition of the industrial proletariat and other groups of wage earners;

the question of the proletariat's allies in the class struggle in the light of the growing role of wage earners engaged in mental labor and the increased activity of mass anti-imperialist movements of youth, Negroes, and intellectuals;

the role of the working class in the general democratic movement of the masses;

the struggle of progressive labor forces against the influence of bourgeois ideology on the labor movement.

и капитализм. Противоречия капиталистической автоматизации, Moscow, 1964; М. Кошнев, «Безработица в США и ее влияние на положение рабочего класса.» — *Положение и борьба рабочего класса капиталистических стран*, Moscow, 1959.

CONCLUSION

The entire history of the USA is the history of the struggle of classes. The proletariat and the bourgeoisie—the two antipodes—comprise the basis of the social structure of American society. They are divided by irreconcilable class contradictions inherent in the capitalist system.

The struggle of the working class in the United States, as well as in other capitalist countries, develops under the impact of internal and external economic and political factors. This struggle has not only specific national features, but also common features characteristic of the international labor movement as a whole.

The labor movement in the USA developed unevenly. It had certain distinctive features at each stage of the general crisis of capitalism. Ups and downs were observed in the labor movement in the period between the two world wars. Thus, in 1918-1919 there were large-scale strike actions against the monopolies, especially in the steel and coal industries and maritime and railway transport. These were years of an upsurge of the labor movement. However, in the second half of the 1920s, during the period of "prosperity", there was a marked ebb of the labor movement, although in some industries the workers' struggle was sharp. At the end of that decade, the influence of bourgeois ideology on the workers increased, contributing factors being the economic situation and the propaganda of Gompersism. Many labor leaders and the unions that followed them embarked on the road of so-called union capitalism.

A new surge of labor's struggle, which manifested itself in an unprecedented sweep of the unemployed movement and strike actions and in the creation of industrial unions, was triggered by the economic crisis and depression of the 1930s. Direct results of the sharpened class conflicts were the split of the AFL and the emergence of the CIO.

During World War II, the general crisis of capitalism entered a new stage. Under these conditions, the forces of the working class were consolidated under the leadership of the big unions and their national centers, the AFL and CIO. Moreover, the struggle against fascism imparted a political character to the labor movement.

In the postwar years, working-class actions, mainly of an economic character, were broad in scope, especially between 1946 and 1948 and in 1952. The working people succeeded in defending their economic positions. An important event was the merger in 1955 of the AFL and CIO into a single center, the AFL-CIO.

In the second half of the 1950s capitalism entered the third stage of its general crisis, when the internal contradictions in the capitalist countries were sharply aggravated. The years that followed saw new economic and political developments, and technological advances brought about qualitative changes in industry due to automation. New industries—the atomic, electronic, missile, synthetic materials, cybernetic devices and others—came into being. The production process itself was automated to a high degree, as a result of which labor productivity increased. Advances in cybernetics also promoted progress in the reorganization of accounting.

The International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969 made a thorough analysis of the new socio-economic processes taking place in the world and, above all, in the labor and communist movement. The Meeting recognized with high appreciation the unprecedented opportunities offered by the scientific and technological revolution, but at the same time stressed that under conditions of monopoly domination it "leads to the reproduction of social antagonisms on a growing scale and in a sharper form". In the United States, technological advances led to heavy social consequences and the expansion of class conflicts. "The depth

of the crisis in the capitalist world," the document of the Meeting says, "is also strikingly revealed by the advance of the mass struggle in the United States itself, that main pillar of world imperialism."¹

Mass actions by workers in defense of their economic and social interests are a law of capitalism, the inevitable fruit of its production relations. According to Marx, this struggle of the workers represents the "reactions of labour against the previous action of capital".² The capitalists are out to raise the maximum rate of profit, but "the fixation of its actual degree is only settled by the continuous struggle between capital and labour.... The matter resolves itself into a question of the respective powers of the combatants."³

The present work shows through numerous examples the correlation of opposing forces at different stages of the economic and political development of the country. The unevenness of the strike movement in the USA in the recent period stemmed from the fluctuations in the economic situation, particularly the cycles of industrial upturns, crises and recessions and the changes in the economic condition of the working class connected with them.⁴

Statistics and the facts of every-day life refute the assertions made by American historians and economists that the class struggle is dying out. They show that in recent years the working class has "demonstrated organization, a militant spirit, and readiness to take resolute actions".⁵ Strikes in the postwar period were on a larger scale and more effective than those between the two world wars.

The strike was labor's powerful weapon. Workers resorted to it both during years of crisis and depression and in years of economic recovery, taking strike actions with greater caution during a crisis, when the threat of mass unemployment hung

¹ *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969, Prague 1969*, pp. 19, 20.

² K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 2, p. 70.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

⁴ See the diagram *Strike Movement in the USA from 1918 Through 1965*.

⁵ *On the Centenary of the Birth of V. I. Lenin. Theses of the Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Moscow, 1969*, p. 43.

over them, and with more resolve during years of industrial upturn as they sought to take advantage of the favorable economic situation. Marx and Lenin revealed and explained this feature of the workers' strike struggle during phases of industrial upturn.¹

The American proletariat's Achilles' heel continues to be the lack of integrated economic and political struggle. Nevertheless, the strike as one of the forms of the labor movement has always been an important means of defending the vital interests of the workers. Their high degree of organization and tenacity often forced employers to make concessions. Bourgeois propaganda widely publicizes the fact that the economic condition of a large section of the working people has improved. But the apologists for capitalism say little or nothing about what it cost the workers to achieve this, about the fierce battles they had to fight to wrest concessions from capital. Moreover, they claim that the present standard of living of the working people, for which they are allegedly obliged to the monopolies, is prosperity. However, this is refuted by Department of Labor data indicating that the annual earnings of even the highest-paid workers in the manufacturing industry amounted to only two-thirds of what was required for a "moderate" expense budget for a family of four, which in 1969 was already \$10,300.²

As a rule, strikes were not just momentary events for the workers. Regardless of their scope or results, they were and remain a school of mass struggle for them. It was through mass strikes that the workers succeeded in creating and strengthening trade unions as their class organizations.

In its efforts to subordinate the labor movement to itself, the bourgeoisie increasingly sought help from the state, using its machine of coercion. During the period of recent history, especially since the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, government interference in labor relations became a characteristic practice. The Roosevelt administration pursued a flexible and subtle policy of "regulating" labor relations, agreeing as it did

¹ See K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 2, pp. 69-70; V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 26.

² *New Program of the Communist Party U.S.A.*, New York, 1970, p. 12.

so to substantial economic and legal concessions to the workers. Government interference increased in the postwar years. This was strikingly evident in the passage by Congress of a number of anti-labor laws and in the activity of labor relations boards, congressional committees and mediation services.

What the dominant class feared most of all was that mass actions of the American proletariat would turn into a militant political movement. That is why the bourgeoisie did and still does everything possible to keep the labor movement within the bounds of trade-unionism. This was also the line taken by the New Deal, whose immediate objective was to overcome the economic and political consequences of the crisis of 1929-1933. Roosevelt took the road of bourgeois reformism and of increasing the regulating role of the government.

As the New Deal reforms began to take effect, the monopoly bourgeoisie became increasingly uneasy and therefore sought to gain control over the various New Deal institutions. But its fears in the face of Roosevelt's bourgeois reforms were really groundless, for not only did they not undermine the foundations of capitalism; they were instrumental in restoring the capitalist economy. Despite all their limitations, Roosevelt's measures to a certain extent met the immediate interests of labor and at the same time helped stabilize the economic situation in the country, which in the final analysis served the political interests of capitalism.

The history of the United States attests to the democratic character of many actions of the American proletariat. Prominent among them was the unemployed movement during the world economic crisis. Fully applicable to that movement are Marx's words that "out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a *political* movement, that is to say, a *class* movement, with the object of enforcing its interests in a general form, in a form possessing general, socially coercive force".¹

The democratic traditions of American labor manifested themselves also in the movement for the creation of Farmer-Labor parties in the states. Some local unions became collective members of such organizations and took an active part in their

¹ Marx/Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, p. 255.

work. Underlying the movement for a third party was the discontent of progressive workers and farmers with the policies of the bourgeois parties. However, this movement, which unfolded in the mid-1920s and the 1930s, and again at the end of the 1940s, failed to achieve its objectives. The broad masses of Americans, who were under the strong influence of bourgeois propaganda, were not ready for a third party. The ruling circles, fearing that the idea of a third party might turn into a real force for social progress, used every means at their disposal to suppress popular sentiment in favor of breaking with the two-party political system.

Moreover, the rightist labor leaders came out against freeing the labor movement from the influence of the two-party system. Most of them were against a third party. As for political figures like La Follette or Wallace who headed Farmer-Labor or Progressive Party movements, they themselves were not spokesmen for the interests of the broad masses of working people and therefore could not become their real ideological and militant leaders. Third parties ultimately suffered defeat.

All this, however, does not mean that the formation of a third party is no longer a task of the American labor movement. Everything said above merely re-emphasizes the difficulties involved in the struggle to bring it about. The new program of the American Communists calls for the creation of a people's party. The Communists say: "We are for maximum political struggle, for independent positions and forms, within the two-party vise. But the historical direction we see in this struggle, the desired goal, is creation of a new people's party."¹

The democratic traditions of the proletariat manifested themselves also in the struggle for the creation of industrial unions, as a result of which a progressive association, the CIO, was founded. Its creation was a major success for the left forces in the labor movement. Like the demonstrations of unemployed in the crisis years, this mass action of the second half of the 1930s was anti-monopoly in character. At the same time, underlying the movement for the CIO was the desire to

¹ *New Program of the Communist Party U.S.A.*, p. 83.

draw the broad masses of unorganized workers into the struggle against the domination of the monopolies, the desire for unity of actions and freedom from the influence of the conservative AFL clique. In its militant spirit, mass involvement and radicalism, the movement for the creation of the CIO was in direct line with the best democratic traditions of the American working class.

One of the important political results of the democratic movement in the USA was the emergence in 1919 of the Communist Party. It owed its appearance, among other factors, also to the preceding struggle of the two trends in the labor movement. The creation of this party was a victory for the revolutionary trend. It was formed at a time when the labor movement was on the upsurge and under the influence of the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. However, from the very outset, the Communist Party encountered hostility toward itself on the part of not only the nation's ruling circles but also Gompers, and later his followers, Green, Meany, Woll, Dubinsky and other labor officials who waged a frenzied campaign against it, banning Communists from the unions or preventing them from holding office.

In the late 1920s, the party overcame considerable difficulties connected with the internal ideological crisis brought on by right-wing capitulators headed by Jay Lovestone. It developed extensive work among the masses in the 1930s and was in the front ranks of the movement of unemployed against hunger and poverty. The party made a significant contribution to the building of industrial unions and the CIO, and to the movement against fascism and war. Together with other democratic organizations, it took part in the struggle in 1942-1943 for a second front in Europe. During the war it had to go through a second and even graver ideological and organizational crisis precipitated by the Browder group of right opportunists.

In the early postwar years, American reaction went over to a policy of cold war and persecuting progressive forces. At that time, the Communists took an active part in the movement for peace and strengthened their ties with certain democratic organizations.

In the second half of the 1950s, a group headed by Gates

and acting in opposition to Marxist-Leninist teaching launched a new campaign to liquidate the party. This move was another relapse of right-wing revisionism in the party's ranks. The 16th and 17th conventions in 1957 and 1959 concentrated on combatting the capitulators, for as a result of the subversive activities of the right-wing elements, the party faced a serious political, ideological and organizational crisis. One of the difficulties, the 16th convention pointed out, was the fact that the labor movement was unable to assess the full significance of the attacks being made against the Communists and did not come out in support of their rights.

The party had to live and work under the difficult conditions of a police regime within the country. But even so, in 1967 and 1969 it managed to hold its 18th and 19th conventions, which discussed urgent questions of struggle. In recent years, the party has been able to revive its political work.

At the 19th convention, the General Secretary Gus Hall, speaking of the tasks of the party in the light of the domestic political situation, stressed the further deepening and aggravation of the crisis of imperialism. He said that while the rank-and-file union members more actively joined in the class struggle, labor union officialdom more and more openly pursued a policy of conciliation with the bourgeoisie. The convention outlined the immediate tasks of the Communists in the struggle against the monopolies, for peace, and against the war in Vietnam. The convention denounced those who took the revisionist line of rejecting the dictatorship of the proletariat.

One of the main topics at the convention was the adoption of the new party program. It gives a Marxist analysis of the economic, political and social processes in the United States and outlines the tasks of the Communists. The program calls for the creation of an anti-monopoly alliance of American working people, directed against the two-party system.

The American Communists continue their fight for equality and civil rights and against the oppression of Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Mexican Americans and other groups who because of their race or nationality cannot fully exercise their civil rights. The party defines the struggle against racism and chauvinism in the trade union movement and in the economic

and political life of the nation as one of the basic tasks of the Communists.

The nationality and racial question is of great importance in the labor movement of the USA. Black workers are an organic part of the American proletariat. There is no independent Black labor movement; there is a movement of the American proletariat as a whole. At the same time, the mass struggle of the Blacks, which markedly intensified in the 1960s, has become nationwide, and this has inevitably affected the labor movement as a whole. The tactics of the emancipation struggle of the Blacks constitute one of the most complex problems standing before the American people and the working class in particular.

It is all the more important, therefore, to stress that the Black question has still not found the place it deserves in the labor movement. Among labor leaders there are still many who are against admitting Blacks into the unions. Compers, Green, Meany and their like were always proponents of discrimination and jimcrow policies. It is not surprising that even today there are only 1.5 million Blacks in unions. Trade union leaders display inertia in supporting the mass Black movement. Only in the CIO unions was a progressive policy in the Black question pursued and did opposition develop to the chauvinism of the reactionary leaders.

The entire history of the American Blacks is one of continuous struggle against humiliation and discrimination. In such a rich country as the USA, Black workers find themselves on the lowest rung of the social ladder, living in conditions of poverty. For many long years the Black movement followed a peaceful course and was under the influence of the religious concept of non-violent resistance. Despite this, the racist elements and authorities in the southern states responded to the peaceful protest of the Black masses with brutal reprisals. The authorities, for their part, restricted themselves merely to passing laws banning segregation in the schools and public transport, which, though important, were not effectively enforced.

However, the events in the period 1966-1968 showed the world on whose side the government was. It brutally suppressed Black uprisings in Los Angeles, Newark, Detroit,

New York, Milwaukee, Washington, Birmingham, Portland and many other cities.

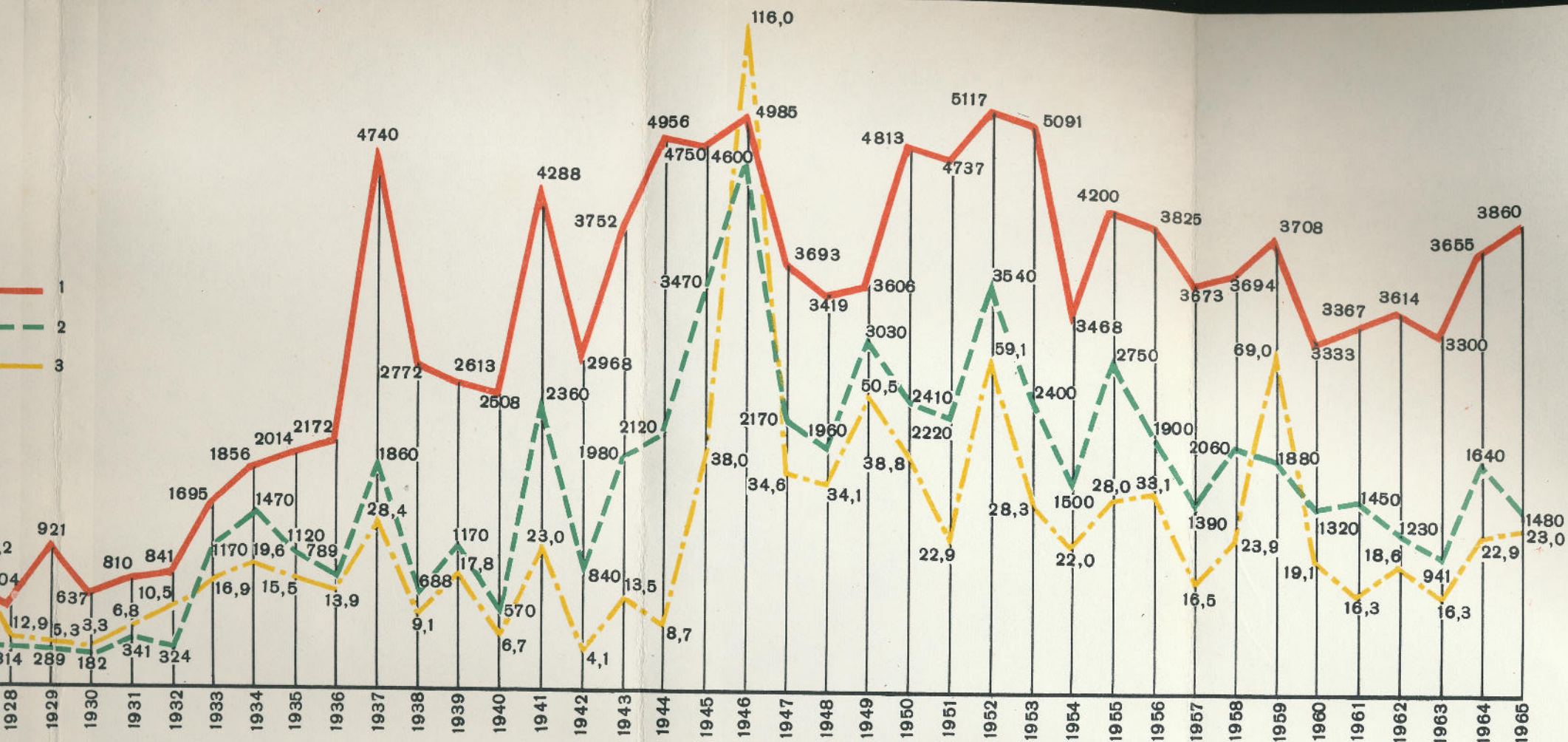
In the hot summer of 1967, the White House and Congress waged a real war against the people. President Johnson and the military command directed operations to suppress the Black uprisings. Government troops were sent into dozens of cities to help local police and National Guard units. Soldiers fired upon thousands of people in Black ghettos.

In April 1968, the famous Black leader, Martin Luther King, who devoted his life to the cause of emancipating his people, was assassinated in Memphis. Washington, in whose streets Black unrest broke out in protest against this wanton act of violence, looked like a front-line city. The death of Martin Luther King triggered a new wave of uprisings in Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Baltimore and dozens of other cities. Simultaneously with these actions, the progressive forces of America organized a march of poor people on Washington. But its participants were subjected to brutal repressive actions. Since the time of the hunger marches in the early 1930s, these events have been the most significant in the history of mass movements in the USA.

The American proletariat has not been indifferent to developments in the world. By virtue of their kinship with the proletariat of other countries in terms of their common social and economic status, the progressive American workers have sympathized with the struggle of their class brothers and displayed solidarity and internationalism. It is not surprising that the ruling circles tried hard to hide from the working people the truth about the revolutionary movement in Russia and Western Europe. Those workers who learned the truth about the events in Russia welcomed the proletarian revolution of 1917. From the very first days they came out in its defense under the slogan "Hands Off Soviet Russia." Progressive unions took an active part in collecting money and food for the starving workers of Russia. Lenin expressed high appreciation of this help.¹

John Reed, William Haywood, Charles Ruthenberg, William

¹ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, pp. 526-27.



Strike Movement in the USA from 1918 Through 1965

From 1918 through 1965, 143,853 strikes took place in the USA, involving a total of 74,998,000 workers and resulting in 972.8 million man-days idle

- number of work stoppages
- number of workers involved (in thousands)
- .- number of man-days idle (in millions). (Figures for 1918-1926 not available.)

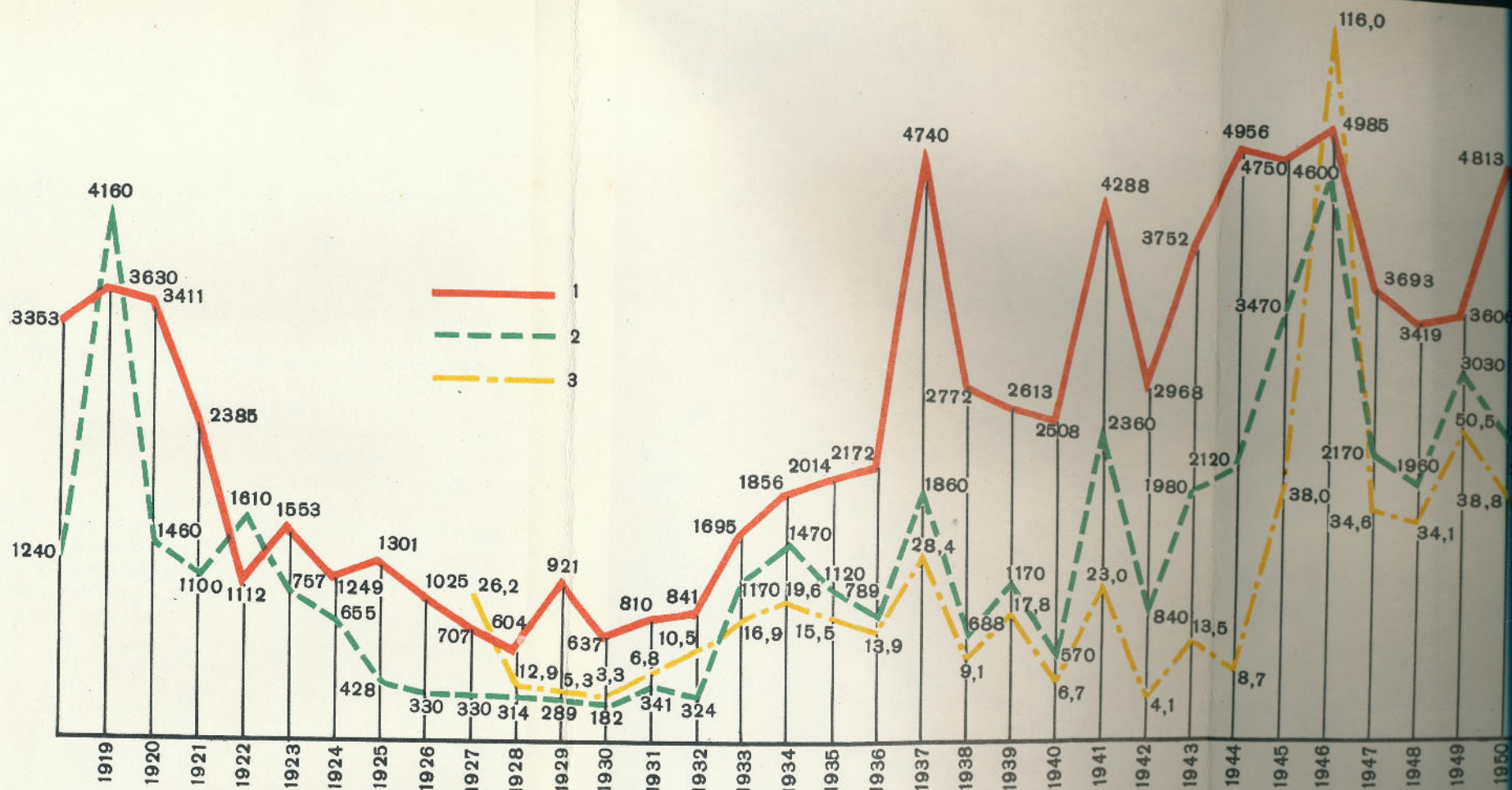
Sources: *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957* (figures for 1918-1957); *Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to 1957. Continuation to 1962 and Revisions* (figures for 1958-1962); *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1965*, (figures for 1963-1964); *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1966, p. 952 (figures for 1965).

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Foster, Albert Rhys Williams, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and many others carried the truth about Soviet Russia to the masses.

In the late 1930s a movement was mounted against fascism and war. Taking part in it were progressive CIO unions, a number of AFL organizations, some Farmer-Labor parties, and a large segment of democratically-minded intelligentsia. The participants of this movement came out in defense of the Spanish Republic, and many fought in the battles against fascism. However, the movement was unable to become wide or effective enough to force the ruling circles to abandon the policy of "non-intervention". The Soviet Union's proposal for collective security was rejected. Under those circumstances, there was no force capable of preventing a second world war. The working class in the United States, as in other countries of bourgeois democracy, was also divided.

During the war, the democratic traditions in the American labor movement manifested themselves in the solidarity movement with the countries fighting against fascism, which demanded rendering them effective aid with arms, medicines and food. It broadened after Hitler Germany attacked the Soviet Union. When the USA entered the war it developed further as it took up the call for a second front in 1942-1943. On the whole, this movement, directed toward the total defeat of fascism, was also distinctly of a political character.

An important aspect of the labor movement in the United States was the international activity of the American labor unions. Prior to World War II they did not have strong ties even with the reformist Amsterdam International. However, in the 1930s, when the threat of fascism and war hung over the world, interest in international events grew noticeably in progressive American labor circles. World War II intensified the desire for unity among the workers of the countries that had fought against fascism. As a result, the CIO took an active part in the creation of the World Federation of Trade Unions. At the same time, the AFL refused to take part in the action. In the postwar period, the American unions became more active in the international arena. The ruling circles of the USA undertook to use the labor leaders for their own ends, to connect their activity with the government's foreign policy line

and especially with the State Department. The AFL and CIO leaders themselves were no less interested in these connections. They were the ones who engineered the split of the WFTU and created the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to counterbalance it.

In the meantime, the policies and tactics of the AFL and the CIO were becoming more and more alike. The objectives of the ruling circles' cold war and anti-communism appealed to the top leaders of both associations. In 1949 and 1950, the reactionary elements in the CIO leadership openly embarked on splitting action and brought about the expulsion of progressive unions, with a total of over a million members, from the CIO. As the balance of forces within the CIO shifted, the rightist leaders began to wield greater influence also in the international activities of this organization. In 1955, they began to move toward merger with the AFL. The initiators were the top officials of both trade union centers. Sooner or later, the nature of this merger was bound to affect the destiny of the new federation. The conservative line of its leaders, headed by Meany, was bound to clash with the democratic aspirations of progressive union figures and the broad cross-section of organized labor. But this would take years to happen. In the meantime, in the second half of the 1950s, the merger of the AFL and CIO strengthened the positions of Meany's group not only within the labor movement in the USA, but in Europe as well. In the ICFTU it managed to push aside the leaders of Britain's Trades Union Congress, and, consequently, laid claim to the dominant position in that confederation.

At the same time, the American labor leaders encountered resistance from progressive forces in the international labor movement and above all from the WFTU. Within the ICFTU itself, the influence of opponents to the cold war policy increased. The trade unions of former colonial countries and dependencies became an increasingly important factor in the international labor movement.

At the close of the 1960s, acute contradictions threatened to precipitate a rupture of relations between the AFL-CIO and the ICFTU. The Americans accused the confederation of being bureaucratic and unwilling to combat communism in the developing countries. In December 1968, the executive council

of the AFL-CIO decided not to take part in the activities of the ICFTU, and in 1969 broke with the confederation completely. This move was a direct result of the reactionary, divisive, anti-labor policy of the AFL-CIO leaders, who could not bear being even in such an international organization as the ICFTU simply because democratic sentiments had appeared in it.

Thus, the history of the American labor movement shows that a continuous battle has been going on between the revolutionary and opportunist trends in its ranks. The standard bearers of the revolutionary trend were outstanding leaders of the socialist and communist movements. Among these, gaining wide recognition were Eugene Debs, William Haywood, John Reed, Charles Ruthenberg, William Foster, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Eugene Dennis, Henry Winston and Gus Hall. There were also many democratically-minded trade union leaders who played a prominent role in progressive CIO unions. These include such popular figures as Harry Bridges, Ben Gold, Albert Fitzgerald, John Clark and Reid Robinson. Leading exponents of the opportunist trend include Samuel Gompers, William Green, John Frey, George Meany, Matthew Woll, David Dubinsky, William Hutcheson, Jay Lovestone. However, substantial differences in views and sentiments frequently arose among the conservative leaders as well. To turn a blind eye to these divergences would mean to deny the positive role that was played in the history of the labor movement by such leaders as John L. Lewis, Philip Murray, Sidney Hillman, Charles Howard, Allan Haywood, R. J. Thomas, Walter Reuther, Michael Quill, Joseph Curran, Emil Rieve and many others. In the trying years of crisis and depression they headed the mass movement for the creation of industrial unions and the CIO. They broke with the Green-Woll clique in the AFL and joined battle against it.

During World War II these CIO leaders exerted no little effort to mobilize the labor unions to back the Roosevelt administration's military measures. They were for strengthening US preparedness for war against fascism. Democratically-minded leaders in local unions acted even more vigorously. They took part in the movements for solidarity with the countries fighting fascism, for opening the second front in Europe, for joint actions with Soviet and British trade unions,

and for the creation of the World Federation of Trade Unions. There were many union officials, not only in the CIO but also in some AFL organizations, who denounced the anti-labor line of the conservative AFL leaders. As noted in the report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 22nd Congress of the CPSU: "Right-wing Socialist leaders and many trade union bosses have long since betrayed the interests of the working class and faithfully serve monopoly capital. But among the Social-Democratic rank and file, among the functionaries and even within the leadership there are many honest people who sincerely want to take part in the common struggle for working-class interests. They have lately been putting up increasing resistance to the policy of the Right-wing leaders."¹

Events in 1965-1970, which go beyond the chronological bounds of the present study, only confirm the need to take this development into account. The struggle for unity in the American labor movement assumed increasing significance. A number of union leaders took important steps toward activating their unions. For example, in August 1966, on behalf of the United Auto Workers, Walter Reuther came out openly against Meany's policies. He disassociated himself from the AFL-CIO executive council's resolution on Vietnam, calling it unworthy of American labor. In February 1967, in protest against Meany's reactionary line, this union withdrew its representatives from the AFL-CIO executive council.

In April 1968, the UAW convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, adopted a resolution to withdraw the union from the AFL-CIO. Long before this happened, Meany's bureaucratic upper clique had expelled the two-million-strong teamsters' union. That action dealt a heavy blow to the AFL-CIO. Now, the withdrawal from the AFL-CIO of the big auto workers' union, with a membership of over 1.5 million that year, was a new blow to the federation.

This situation in the labor movement came as a result of the further rift in the US working class, for which the Meany clique was to blame. These events also confirm the fact that the merger of the AFL and CIO in 1955 was the outcome of a deal

¹ *The Road to Communism*, Moscow, 1962, p. 35.

between top leaders who were far from looking for any real democratic unity of the labor movement. The working masses were not the active motive force behind this merger, and as a result, conservative-minded trade union officials seized the initiative for the merger into their own hands. The latter were unable to overcome the internal contradictions existing between the AFL and CIO.

In May 1969, representatives of the Teamsters and United Auto Workers held a joint conference in Washington. The conference decided to create an Alliance for Labor Action, and its participants attacked the AFL-CIO leadership's policies within the labor unions and their stand on foreign policy issues. They called on organized workers to set the unions into motion again, to take concrete action with regard to pressing economic and social problems, and to launch a campaign for an end to the American intervention in Vietnam.

In a half-century of its history the working class of the USA traversed an arduous road of struggle. It lay through setbacks and defeats and entailed sacrifices and deprivations. The bourgeoisie realizes the growing role and political significance of the working class in the historical destiny of the nation. That is why it has always striven to stifle labor's urge for unity and independent political struggle.

Never considering repressive measures to be the only way of dealing with the labor movement, the ruling class has always sought to influence it by bringing the working class into ideological subordination. To accomplish these ends, the bourgeoisie makes wide use of the propaganda machine of the American monopolies and state. Their propaganda is designed to hide the main social antagonisms and defects in contemporary American society, to blunt the class consciousness of the working people and their will to struggle, to cultivate individualism in workers and draw them away from politics and efforts to solve fundamental social problems. And many rightist labor leaders as well as a large body of historians, economists and sociologists help the bourgeoisie in pursuing this line.

History has convincingly shown the role of the working class as the motive force behind the development of modern society

along the road of progress. It confirms the words of the outstanding American, Abraham Lincoln, who said in his time: "Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital."¹

As Marx and Engels said about the proletariat, "not in vain does it go through the stern but steeling school of *labour*".² For the proletariat, this school is struggle against the monopolies—an objective and law-governed process determined by the social and economic position of the proletariat under capitalism. In this connection, the following words of Marx and Engels are of particular significance today: "It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment *regards* as its aim. It is a question of *what the proletariat is*, and what, in accordance with this *being*, it will historically be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is visibly and irrevocably foreshadowed in its own life situation as well as in the whole organisation of bourgeois society today."³

¹ *The Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, Pt. IV, Appendix, Washington, 1862, p. 4.

² K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1975, p. 37.

³ *Ibid.*

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